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Table 14: Chronology of Ethiopian History

Historical Beginnings in the Area : Early Contacts

2900 B.C. Region of Nubia conquered by Pharao Zoser, 3rd Dynasty of Egypt. He imports gold and copper from "Punt" (apparently Somaliland).

2625 B.C. Troglodyte (cave-dwelling) trubes expelled by rulers of the Egyptian 6th Dynasty, from the edge of the "eastern desert"; recorded by the Palermo stone.

1500-1000 B.C. Nubia under Egyptian Dynastic rule.

1000 B.C.(about) Many Egyptian priestly families flee southward after an unsuccessful revolt against the 21st Dynasty of Egypt. They carry the worship of Amon from Thebes to Nubia, now independent, and into Ethiopia proper, attempting to reproduce the Amonite Theocracy in their new home.

950 B.C. Approximate period of visit of the legendary Queen of Sheba To King Solomon in Jerusalem, according to the Abyssinian Royal Chronicles which link this to the Biblical account.

750 B.C.(about) Full development of the Nubian Kingdom of Napata, site of the former Egyptian frontier station for trade with the Sudan. The local dynasty of kings probably descended from the priestly refugees from Thebes.

722-663 B.C. Kings of Napata rule over Egypt as the 25th Dynasty of Egypt Greek writers refer to this Napata Kingdom as the "Ethiopian Theocracy".

670-622 B.C. Assyrian kings conquer Egypt, force out the Nubian Dynasty. As a result, Napata Kingdom moves southward to a new capital known as Meroe, withdraws from northern contacts.

599 B.C. Cyrus II is enthroned, and later takes Egypt, Arabia, and penetrates to the borders of Abyssinia, establishing trade routes and contacts that outlast his conquests.

525 B.C. Cambyses fails to conquer Kingdom of Meroe. End of Direct Persian contacts with Ethiopia.

Origin and Development of the Abyssinian Kingdom of Axum (Aksum).

1300 B.C. Approximate period of the development of civilizations in the Hadhramaut and neighboring areas of southwest Arabia: Irrigation of fields, dams; spice trade to Egypt; the Himyarite written alphabet "musnad"; religious temple worship to the Moon god with the motif of crescent and disk. Kingdoms of Saba, Ma'in, Qataban, Ausan, and later, Marib.

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500 B.C.(about) Beginning of series of invasions and colonization of northern Abyssinia by Geez-speaking Himyarites from the Hadhramaut. They introduce the scratch plow, stone Cisterns, stone houses, and the spice trade. Later, to carry spices from the Abyssinian upland through the desert to the Red Sea port of Adulis (the modern Zula), the Himyarites introduce the camel.

247-223 B.C. Ptolemy Euergetes of Egypt extends his Graeco-Egyptian empire southward along the Red Sea as far as Adulis (Zula). Greek inscriptions found later at this Abyssinian port recount his campaigns.

80 A.D. Continued contact with the Greek and Roman Mediterranean through ships plying the Red Sea, reported by Periplus, Alexandria merchant.

200-300 A.D. Hadhramaut motherland of the Abyssinian colonists comes under the dominance of the Kingdom of Saba. The colonists set up own capital at Axum, in northern Abyssinia.

270 A.D. Axumite Abyssinians invade the mother country in Arabia Felix.

330 A.D.(about) Syrian Christian missionaries reach the court of Axum and convert the royal family and some nobles to Christianity. Abyssinian tradition of St. Frumentius, who was appointed "Abuna", Bishop of Abyssinia, with the title "Abba Salama" (Father of Peace) by the Metropolitan of Alexandria, Egypt.

378 A.D. With the zeal of new converts, the Axumites invade Arabia Felix once again, to "protect opressed Christians" there, but are driven back by the rulers of Yemen. Christianity at Axum receives a setback.

450 A.D.(abt.) Inscriptions in the Axumite Kingdom of this period record that King Tzana (or Tazana) began his rule as a worshipper of Astar and of Mahrem, but ended as a Christian. He is referred to as the Constantine of Abyssinia.

449 A.D. The Monophysite Doctrine (Christ's nature one) forms at Council of Ephesus, in contradiction to the earlier Nicene Council. The next year, at the Council of Chalcedon, the Monophysites break away and form a separate church. The Abyssinian church, as branch of the Coptic church of Alexandria, joins the Monophysites, breaks contact with the Roman church.

500 A.D.(abt.) Arrival in Abyssinia of the legendary "nine saints", probably Syrian monks, who reinforce Christianity at Axum. They are referred to in Abyssinian literature as "Qeddusan Romaweyan" (lit. Roman Saints), but were apparently Monophysites. The Bible is translated from Greek into Geez, for although Greek was the court language at Axum, the people still spoke Geez, even most of the nobles.

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525 A.D. With renewed Christian zeal, the Axumite King Kaleb invades Yemen to "protect opressed Christians", and defeats King D'hu Nuwas of Yemen. Returning Abyssinian soldiers carry much booty from Yemen to Abyssinia, but in return introduce the coffee bean and the drug leaf qat (çhat) into Yemen, where both are soon planted and become popular.

550 A.D.(abt) Travels and writings of Cosmas, who finds the old Greek inscriptions at Adulis. Greek and Roman ships ply the Red Sea.

570 A.D. Christian Abyssinians have reached the outskirts of Mecca, but are defeated there and finally driven out of Asia for the last time.

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687 A.D. War between Abyssinia and Nubia.

644 A.D. Alexandria, spiritual center of Monophysite Copts, conquered by the Muslims. Because Monophysites had protected early Muslim refugees, Mohammed had promised them protection. Therefore, though cut off from the Mediterranean by the Muslim tide for the next millenium, Christian Abyssinia remains under the spiritual jurisdiction of Alexandria.

950 A.D.(abt) Gradual breakup of the Kingdom of Axum, due to regional rebellions and movements for local independence, sometimes motivated in part by religious differences. Abyssinian Royal Chronicles record uprising of the exiled Falashas (who follow Mossic Judaism) under their Queen Judith, which lasted 40 years.

990-1260 Christian Warlord Zagwe and his dynasty rule from new capital at Lasta. There, King Lalibäla builds the remarkable rock-hewn churches existing to this day. Zagwe kings compromise with the Coptic church by permitting foreign (Egyptian) Abuna as its head in Abyssinia. But the so-called "Solomonic line" claiming descent from Axum and favored by the Abyssinian church continues somewhat further south in Abyssinia, as the Kingdom of Shoa.

1177 A.D. King of Abyssinia known in the Western world as "Prester John" is asked by Pope Alexander III to participate in the attempt to conquer Jerusalem. But the Muslim area in between makes this impossible.

Hegemony of the "Solomonic Line" of the Kingdom of Shoa; the Amhara emerge.

1260 A.D. The "Solomonic" King of Shoa, Yekuno Amlak, becomes "King of Kings" of Abyssinia, with aid of the Coptic Church of Abyssinia. The head of the church, Abuna Takla Haymanot, receives one-third of the land of the empire as reward to the church, and proceeds to build monasteries, notably the (still existing) one at Däbra Libanos in Shoa. Zealous monks accompany troops in regional warfare and force conversions in some instances. Amharic, the language spoken by the people of Shoa as vulgate of Geez and Cushitic,

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supplants Geez as the spoken language of Abyssinia.

1314-1344 King 'Amda Sion rules Abyssinia, during a period of increasing contact with Arab neighbors: militarily hostile, but enriching the literature of Abyssinia. The Arabs gain footholds in Somaliland in the South, with the Dankali in the east, and Sudanese and Nilotic tribes to the northwest. Meanwhile Arabic and Coptic translations into Geez include the Book of Adam and Eve. To link the Shoa Dynasty directly to the "Solomonic Dynasty" of Solomon and Sheba, the book "Kebra Nagast", (Glory of the Kings) is composed during this period. Translations from Arabic include epics, liturgies, fables, romances; some via the Coptic church in Alexandria which is now Arabic-speaking.

1434-1468 Rule of King Zar'a Ya'Qob. Continued intermittent warfare against Muslim pressure at the borders, also against Shanqalla tribes and Falashas, to safeguard holy manuscripts against burning by Muslims, Copic monks hide many on islands in Lake Tana, e.g. on Daga Estefanos. Translations from the Arabic include "Tamra Maryam", Miracles of Mary. Contact with Arabs brings luxury items such as perfumes in glass bottles and marroquin leather (hence "arabena" for leatherworker).

1468-1478 Rule of King Baede-Mariam. Royal Abyss'nian Chronicles report continued intermittent warfare.

1478-1494 Rule of King Eskender. During his reign a second Portuguese Delegation arrives and finds the leader of the first Delegation, Pedro de Cavilham (sent some decades earlier by Prince Henry the Navigator to the "cinnamon and like spices" land of "Prester John") still alive, though aged. He had been hospitably received, but not been permitted to return home, and had taken an interest in Abyssinian church paintings.

1508-1540 Rule of King Lebna Dengel. Hard-pressed by Muslim invasions from the southeast, the king manages to send the Armenian Mathaeus to Portugal, asking for help. The messenger reaches Portugal in 1513.

1520-1527 Portuguese embassy arrives in Abyssinia, led by Father Alvarez. Portuguese begin attempts to convert the royal court to Roman Catholicism. Upon return to Portugal in 1527, Father Alvarez writes his memoirs, describing the culture of Shoa and Axum, the tent-city capital of the King and his nobles.

1530-1540 Invasion of Abyssinia by the Emir of Harrar, Ahmed ibn Ibrahim el Ghazi, better known as "Gran" (left-handed). With the aid of a new weapon, Turkish firearms ("turk basha"), he overruns most of Abyssinia, burning monasteries and churches, sacking Axum, and killing King Lebna Dengel in battle in 1540.

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Nomadic, islamized Galla tribes settle in Shoa, take up agriculture. They also take up the habit of coffee-drinking, which Mecca had declared permitted ("hallal") in 1510. Coffee penetrates into Arabia from Abyssinia, through a Sufi Muslim brotherhood.

1540-1559 — Rule of King Galaudewos, son of Lebna Dengel. The Chronicles refer to him as Asnaf Sagad I. He barely defends the mountain plateau near Lake Tana, all that is left.

1542 — Portuguese aid finally arrives at Massaua harbor under Don Christofo da Gama, with 400 musketeers. This turns the tide. In 1543, Mohammed Gran is slain in battle. The Portuguese are greatly honored; some settle down and begin families with native girls. Portuguese castles are built at Gorgora, on the northern bank of Lake Tana, also stone bridges over rivers to permit traffic in the rainy season.
Portuguese Jesuits accuse King Galaudewos of "non-Christian" religious customs, but he tolerates their efforts at conversion.
Counter efforts by the coptic clergy lead to regional rebellions.

1545 — The Galla tribes use this to invade once more from the southwest but are finally halted. In 1557 the Turks attack from Massaua to Debra Demo.

1559-1563 — Rule of King Minas (Wanag Sagad II). Continued internal and external tensions.

1563-1597 — Rule of King Sarsa Dengel (Malak Sagad I). Religious polemics between Copts and Catholics stimulate Geez literature. The king sponsors translations of religious novels from the Arabic, (Balaam and Josaphat), and of the "World History" of Abu Shakir, utilizing Yemenites as translators. Original Abyssinian compositions of this period include the work "Hatata" (Researches) by the "lone thinker" Zara Yaqob, son of a poor peasant near Aksum, who developed a theistic religious philosophy after having retired to a cave to think things out. The Coptic clergy condemned the philosophy of this self-taught thinker as "babble", but he became tutor to the son of a nobleman, and his pupil later collaborated with him on this book. Zara Yaqob also wrote some poetry and satire on the polemics of his day (See Littman, 1907, pp. 219-224; Bent, 1903, p. 449).
By 1579 the king feels secure enough to have himself crowned King of Kings at Axum, after halting another Galla invasion in Dembeya. The king reconstructs the Coptic church at Axum. Warfare against the Falashas breaks out in 1581-2, when they are led by Radai, then Kaleb, in Semien province, and in 1585, when Sarsa Dengel defeats their chief, Gushen, at Wary-Amba in Semien and in Woggera province.

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1597-1607 Interregnum follows the death of Sarsa Dengel; there are several contenders for the throne, including ZaDengel, a nephew of the last king, who has become a Catholic. Finally, first with aid of some loyal Galla troops and then with aid of the Portuguese, another descendant of Lebna Dengel, by name of Susneyos, wins.

1607-1632 Rule of King Susneyos. In 1626 the king reluctantly converts to Roman Catholicism, pressed by the impatient Father Alfonso Mendes, who has replaced the patient Father Paes. Civil wars break out immediately, some against the Coptic clergy, some against Falashas upon whom conversion was being urged since they inhabited the area north of Lake Tana to which the center of the kingdom had shifted after the Galla devastation and conquest of Shoa.

The Amhara Center at Gondar.

1632-1667 Rule of King Fasilidas, at Gondar, north of Lake Tana. Immediately upon ascending the throne, this son of Susneyos reversed his father's religious acts, banished all Portuguese from his realm, re-established the power of the Coptic Abyssinian clergy, and thus ended the civil war. Workmen trained by the Portuguese built Fasil's castles further north, at Gondar, and a masonry-enclosed royal pathway to the huge fig tree, under which he regularly judged the people, in Solomonic style. Although he ruled from Gondar, he acknowledged the state religion by being crowned King of Kings at Aksum. He used his military power to subject some of the Galla. His son and successor, Tzadequ Yohannes, built his own castle at Gondar, and that of his Prime Minister is also preserved to this day. He had to subjugate an Amhara rebellion in Gojjam province.
Fasil's grandson, King Yadem Segadiyasus, added his own castles at Gondar, and built many churches in the area, some in Qemant country. He was the last castle builder, for the trained masons had died and their art was gradually fading away.

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Modern Western Contacts

1684-1704 The German Scholar Hiob Ludolphus compiles a History of Abyssinia and a Geez dictionary, with the aid of a converted Abyssinian scholar, Abba Gorgoryos, whom he encountered in Rome. Among Portuguese introductions to Abyssinia during their century of residence there, he records manufacture and growing of wine (grape) for the Mass (later lost in Abyssinia).

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1768-1773 James Bruce travels about in Abyssinia, and finds the King of Kings still resident at Gondar, the capital. On his return, Bruce carries with him the manuscript "Kĕbrä Nägäst" (Kebir Zanegusta, Glory of the Kings), which recounts the story of the "Solomonic Dynasty".

1813 (about) Breakup of the Abyssinian Empire, end of Gondar as the nation's capital. There are six provincial kings who recognize no king of kings. Local and regional chiefs and warlords are divided along feudal lines.

1855-1868 Rule of a commoner usurper, warlord Kassa, who has himself crowned Emperor Theodore (Tewodros) at Gondar. He recognized the need to modernize his country, invited German technicians, welcomed British Protestant missionaries. He realized that he could not modernize his country without first centralizing it. He planned to turn his feudal lords into salaried officials, abolish feudal armies and feudal land tenure, limit tolls, limit the temporal power of the church; and gain the respect of the European world by abolishing the slave trade and enforcing Christian (Western) monogamy. However, he could not carry out any of these plans in face of the opposition of the feudal lords and the clergy. Becoming more bitter, dictatorial, frustrated, violent and cruel, especially after the death in battle of his British advisor and friend, Mr. Bell, he sacked Gondar town, where the British Consul Plowden had been murdered by bandits, and later imprisoned British Protestant missionaries. When Lord Napier landed and attacked the fortress Magdalla in Tigre Province where Theodore had organized his defense, Emperor Theodore committed suicide. Shortly before that, the young King of Shoa, Menelik II, held hostage by Theodore, escaped home to Shoa.

1868-1889 The King of Tigre province is crowned King Johannes (John IV), of Abyssinia, with the aid of the Coptic clergy, and the silent acquiescence of Britain which had withdrawn its troops.

1884-1889 The "Derwishes" attack from the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, sack Gondar, and kill King John IV in battle. The troops from Shoa arrive too late to save him.

Amhara Rule from Addis Ababa

1889-1913 Rule of Menelik II. He consolidated Abyssinia beyond its old boundaries, conquered all Galla provinces and enclisted them as his loyal troops, especially cavalry, armed with spears and Italian rifles, in addition to his Amhara troops. This army defeated the Italian invaders at Adua in 1896. As a result, many European powers sent diplomatic missions to Addis Ababa, the newly built capital on the Shoa plateau. There, some centralization and modernization began.

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1906 — The United States of America establishes a Legation at Addis Ababa.

1913-1916 — Rule of the young king Lidj Yasu, grandson of Emperor Menelik II. A playboy king, he annoyed the Coptic clergy by close ties to Muslims, and annoyed the British by his friendship with Turkish agents at the time of World War I. Deposed by the clergy and feudal lords.

1916-1929 — Ras (Duke) Tafari Makonnen, whose father had conquered the province of Harar for his relative, Emperor Menelik II, becomes Regent of Abyssinia under the formal rule of Empress Zawditu, daughter of Menelik II. Modern-minded and with a French education, Ras Tafari introduced gradual modernization in Addis Ababa and parts of Harar, including elementary and high schools, prohibition of the slave trade, and as much centralization as his limited power then permitted.

1930 — Upon the death of Empress Zawditu, Ras Tafari is crowned King of Kings Haile Selassie. His power and proclaimed changes in administration gradually grow. He proclaims a constitution, changing his actually absolute monarchy into a nominally constitutional one; the new Parliament is appointed, with the expressed hope that some day it can be elective. The emperor changes the name of Abyssinia, officially to Ethiopia.

1936-1941 — Italian invasion and occupation. The major change made by the Italians was the building of a network of roads. Their treatment of the Ethiopians was confused, largely because of ambivalent orders from Rome. Amhara guerilla resistance continued in the mountains, and in 1937 an assassination attempt against Marshall Graziani led to a massacre, especially of educated Ethiopians.

May 1941 — Return of Emperor Haile Selassie, with greater power than ever before. Centralization of the country proceeds more widely than before, and modernization gradually follows.

1951 — Long an advocate of "collective security" in international affairs, Emperor Haile Selassie sends two battalions of his own bodyguard to join the U.N. forces in Korea.
The previous year Ethiopia had signed an "umbrella agreement" with the American Point-Four program, for aid in education and agricultural training.

1954 — Visit of Emperor Haile Selassie to the U.S.A.

1955 — Liberalization of the Ethiopian Constitution by Imperial proclamation. But the modern-educated are still a very small percentage of the population, and the old cultures in the rural areas are still little changed. The nation is still far from homogeneous, though tending in that direction.

697 from the 16th-17th centuries. When this area, which had been a sort of frontier area, became too settled, the political prison was transferred farther northwest to the edge of the escarpment leading down to the Sudan, between Chelga and Metemma.

671 175 779 A formal, written law code was superimposed on the earlier unwritten one in the 13th century, when the Abyssinian church extended its ecclesiastical code to cover also the temporal judicial behavior of lords as well as commoners, in all phases of life. This is referred to as "yäbaherya heg" (lit. the Law from Overseas), regarded as including "Moral Law" (i.e.Church Law).

This code, called the "Fetha Nägäst"(Law of the Kings) was basically derived from Roman Canon Law of Constantine, formulated at the Coptic Synod in Egypt in the 9th and 10th centuries, then translated in 1239, by Al-Safi Abu Al-Fada'il, into the Arabic language which the Copts of Egypt had by that time adopted for their own worship also. The code was a blend of Canons of the Coptic church councils, the Justinian Code, and theBible.

It was brought to Abyssinia during the reign of King Zera-Yaqob, and translated into Geez, then in its final stages as a spoken language, by the Abyssinian priest Petros Gäbre-Egzer. The Fetha Nägäst" became the official supreme law of the land when Bishop Takla-Haymanot resurrected the "Solomonic Dynasty" about that time. Of course the Abyssinian church officially believes that the "Fetha Nägäst" is much older, and that it has never been altered.

671 779 The Code consists of 51 chapters, of which 22 deal with

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grade from the Eritrean plateau. All civilization in Ethiopia has penetrated from north to south along the great dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment, where the so-called Strada Imperiale now runs from Asmara to Addis Ababa.

Along this line have been concentrated the successive Ethiopian capitals with the exception of Gondar, which was chosen far to the north-west as a refuge from the ruinous wars with the Moslems and the Gallas. And along this line, due south from Aksum and Aduwa, were the great centres of the Copto-Ethiopian culture of the Middle Ages, places like Lalibala and the monasteries on lake Haik and the traditional centre of the Coptic Church at Debra Libanos.

From this dorsal ridge of the Eastern Escarpment Ethiopian culture, and it was a very real culture in its heyday, spread westward into Gojjam and southward to the region of the lakes. Luca di Sabelli in his recent 'Storia di Abissinia' has shown that Coptic-Ethiopian missionaries were active as far south as Madagascar and the Mozambique coast.

Ethiopian Coptic culture drew its nurture from the powerful Coptic Church in Cairo, from the Crusading civilization in Palestine, and from the Byzantine Empire. Just as the establishment of the Turks at the exit from the Black Sea brought about the decline of the East Christian cultures in the Caucasus and the Balkans, so the Turkish control of the Nile valley and the Red Sea slowly strangled the Coptic Ethiopian culture of East Africa. The Ethiopian rulers, pressed by the invasions of Muhammad Gran, were well aware of their mortal danger and it is a curious fact that kings in Georgia and Ethiopia appealed to the rising power of Spain in the Western Mediterranean at about the same time. The Portuguese episode in Ethiopia was a delayed response to the appeal made to the Catholic powers.

The extraordinary tenacity of the Ethiopians to the western tradition is a remarkable characteristic of their historical development. The Aksumite kingdom, for all its Semitic appearance, was essentially a projection of Hellenism, and the Aksumite kings remained the traditional allies of the Byzantine Emperors in their struggle with the Persian Sasanids for the control of the Red Sea—an episode which was parallel in time with the conflict between these same two "world powers" for mastery of the Black Sea. The Coptic Church and Christian civilization in East Africa proved more enduring than the once powerful Nestorian Church in Asia, with which it may in some ways be compared. The later Ethiopian Kingdom played the same role in the struggle between Turks and Portuguese for control of the Red Sea and for the trade of the Indian Ocean as the Aksumites had a thousand years earlier in the rivalry between Byzantines and Persians. But they showed the same persistent antagonism to the Roman Church as the East Christians had displayed towards the Crusaders and the Papacy. In the end the Ethiopians expelled the Portuguese from Abyssinia and managed to maintain their own independence against their Moslem neighbours, until in the last decade it was suppressed by a professedly Christian power.

The Ethiopians are a remarkable phenomenon in the East African world and with their tenacity and their undoubted natural intelligence they are destined to have no little influence on the future course of history in that area.

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The great weakness of the Ethiopians, their inveterate regionalism, arises, like other aspects of their life and history, from the peculiar conditions of their geography. The four historic Kingdoms of Tigrai and Amhara, Shoa and Gojjam, cover the plateaux divided by the canyons of the Blue Nile and the Takkaze and their lateral rifts. During four months of the year, the season of the Great Rains between July and October, Gojjam is entirely cut off from Shoa and Amhara by the floods of the Blue Nile. Only recently has the construction of the bridge over the Blue Nile at Shafartak, a major engineering undertaking, made continuous contact possible. The violent regionalism of the Gojjam has been a disastrous factor in internal Ethiopian history which will doubtless tend to decline with the modern development of communications.

The Gojjam, scene of the guerrilla campaign of 1941, has been described by Major Cheesman, formerly H.B.M. Consul in Dangila, in several articles in the Society's *Journal*, and in his standard work on the province, 'Lake Tana and the Blue Nile.' Cheesman's work was in fact the basis of knowledge which made practical the organization of the expedition to reinforce the Patriot groups which were in the field against the Italians at the moment when Italy declared war on Britain. His exploration of the gap up the Escarpment, the fruit of an arduous excursion described in his book, enabled the Frontier Battalion of the Sudan Defence Force with their camel convoys of supplies and arms to make a rapid deployment on to the Escarpment.

The least-known part of the Gojjam province is probably the region of the Choké Mountains which rise to the north of Debra Markos. In an effort to hold down this very wild bit of country the Italians had built forts at Mota and other points and a passable dirt road had been constructed linking Debra Markos *via* Mota with Bahrdar—the Italian strong point at the southern tip of Lake Tana. After the capture of Debra Markos in April 1941, it proved necessary to make contact with the small group of Patriots and one company of Sudanese with some British officers and non-commissioned officers who were containing the very considerable Italian force still in the field round the south-east shore of Lake Tana. At Debra Markos we were very short of troops. Further, scarcity of mules made it necessary to try the experiment of taking camels over the pass which runs under the peaks of Choké at an altitude indicated on Italian maps at rather over 13,000 feet. Kit had to be limited to one ground-sheet and one blanket each for all ranks and the plain-bred Sudanese, many of whom were already lame with jiggers, suffered from cold and mountain-sickness particularly in the hail blizzard which struck the force on the bare ridge of the Choké Pass. Nevertheless this one company of Sudanese covered the 70 odd miles in just under three days, and Colonel Boustead bluffed the Italian battalion in Mota into surrender within forty-eight hours of opening fire with his solitary mortar.

I was following along in the rear with the camel *hamlia* and on reaching base camp in front of Mota was met with orders to about turn and take the animals back to Debra Markos. I thus crossed the Choké Mountains twice in one week. With amateur medical and veterinary duties and a driving mist at the higher altitudes alternating with rain, sleet, and hail, I had little opportunity for geographical observation

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tunity for geographical observation. The vegetation was really fantastic. Along the higher slopes of Choké giant red-hot pokers stretched for miles. Rather lower the ground was carpeted with violets and beautiful mosses. There were bushes of heather growing higher than the height of a man, and a variety of lichens. In the silence of the mountains in the early morning mists, the atmosphere strangely recalled parts of Ireland or the North Cornish coast. It was a fitting background for the magical beliefs and the immaterial psyche of the Ethiopians, which the more matter-of-fact European finds difficult to comprehend.

It was interesting to note that at about 11,000 feet there appeared to be a sort of fly-line. The flies, which are a constant pest round Debra Markos at 9000 feet, entirely disappeared and only appeared again on the incline down to Mota and the Blue Nile.

There were only two or three villages along the track[1] which of course is a new one, but collections of huts were fairly frequent over the lower slopes, particularly on the incline to the Blue Nile. Cultivation was maintained up to about 12,000 feet. I gather from a book on the Heights of Simen (to the north-east of the Gondar area) that there is a flourishing farming life at the same altitudes in that region. Grazing was magnificent and live stock were notably well conditioned by comparison with the animals of the Debra Markos district.

Colonel Boustead's force continued from Mota to Bahrdar at the southern tip of Lake Tana, where they made contact with the small mixed group of Abyssinians, Sudanese, and British under Major Simmonds. The march was continued in the direction of Debra Tabor, the former capital of Ras Gugsa Wolye, which the Italians had made into a major defended locality—the base for a line of dependent forts strung out along the road which linked Dessie on the Strada Imperiale with Gondar. Conditions remained difficult at an altitude of over 9000 feet in the first weeks of the so-called Little Rains which break in May.

Meanwhile a force of one company of Sudanese and one company of a newly formed Ethiopian battalion with a few British officers and N.C.Os. under Colonel Wingate, O/C Gojjam Force, was following the retreating garrison of Debra Markos. About eight thousand of these had survived the operations in Gojjam and they had retired across the Blue Nile, blowing up the Shafartak bridge, and were making for Magdala and Debra Tabor across the mountains which lie to the east of the Blue Nile and to the north of the main road from Debra Markos to Addis Ababa. Harassing operations were kept up throughout the month of May and, when two thousand of Ras Kassa's Shoans joined in, Colonel Wingate was strong enough to bring the enemy to a general action. The affair was decided when Bimbashi Thesiger, by a remarkable 50-mile march in twenty-four hours over hostile country, seized a panhandle connecting two plateaux along which the Italians were intending to retreat. As a result the remnants of the fifty-one enemy battalions stationed in the Gojjam surrendered at Agibar, about four months after the Emperor had set up his original headquarters at Belaia.

All this country on the marches of the ancient kingdoms of Shoa and Amhara was relatively little known before the Italian occupation. I refer to

[1] i.e., in the Choké Mountains. -Analyst
[2] i.e., between Debra Markos and Mota. -Ed.

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

the triangle of mountains bounded on the north by the Dessie–Debra Tabor road; on the west by the canyon of the Blue Nile; on the east by the Strada Imperiale; and on the south by the Debra Markos–Addis Ababa road. Here Ras Kassa's Shoan fief of Salale adjoins his territories in Amhara Saint. Salale is a great grassy upland, in May already swept by rain storms for six or eight hours a day. The road to Addis Ababa passes through Ras Kassa's capital of Fiche, which has the usual character of Abyssinian country towns: an agglomeration of huts standing in rather dreary eucalyptus groves and dominated by a fort and the European villa of the Ras. Salale has the reputation of being the best horse-raising country in Abyssinia.

Fiche has a certain strategic importance in the feudal politics of Abyssinia since it lies across the main line of communication between the capital and Gojjam; and in the period of *coup d'états* in the '20s the lord of Salale was always in the position to intervene suddenly in the capital only 70 miles away.

Ras Kassa has always maintained his loyalty to the Makonnen house. He is a magnificent old veteran of war and politics, rugged and erect in spite of his advanced years. Ras Kassa's two elder sons, who had come in to discuss a truce with the Italians some months after the fall of Addis Ababa in 1936, were executed under circumstances of abominable treachery. Nevertheless the old Ras made himself responsible for the escort of the Agibar prisoners over about 150 miles of country without a single one of them coming to any harm.

I was fortunate in June and July in spending some time in Dessie and in making my way up to the Debra Tabor district where, in mid-July, the Italian garrison of some six thousand men surrendered. Dessie, which means "my joy" in Amharic, is an ideal base from which to study the incomparably beautiful country round. The former capital of Ras Michael, the Moslem father of the ex-Emperor Lij Iyasu, Dessie became the northern military headquarters of the Empire during the years preceding the Italian conquest. Dessie was favourably situated in relation to the Italian frontier in southern Eritrea, but it owed its strategic importance to the inner political situation. To the east and north-east along the line of the Eastern Escarpment overlooking the Danakil Depression and the Red Sea basin is the country of the turbulent Wagara Gallas who were, and who remain, a recurrent threat to internal security. The Wagara clans in fact lie athwart the main south–north route from Addis Ababa to Aduwa and the new and hardly less important motor road down the Escarpment and across the Danakil desert to Assab. During the years 1929–31, each autumn after the Great Rains, the Emperor had not less than thirty thousand men in the field engaged in more or less fruitless marches and counter-marches over the highlands of the Wagara country.

Scarcely less formidable were the great conservative lords of the north: Ras Gugsa of Makale, who afterwards went over to the Italians; Ras Seyum of Tigrai, ruling all the country between the upper Takkaze and the Eritrean border; and Ras Gugsa Wolye of Debra Tabor, an ex-husband of the Empress Zawditu, who himself had pretensions to the throne and the support of the powerful centre of the Coptic priesthood in Aduwa.

The last great feudal campaign in Ethiopia took place in 1931. The Im-

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial Army, recruited largely from the non-Amharic southern region of Galla-Sidamo, advanced from Dessie and met the feudal levies of the pretender on the plateau of Debra Zebit. A great head-on encounter of over thirty thousand riflemen and spearmen took place along a front extending over 10 km. A lucky reconnaissance by the Emperor's two French Potez planes was probably the decisive episode in the battle. Somewhere in the mêlée Ras Gugsa Wolye was dragged from his mule and hacked to pieces. This last epic contest of feudal lords recalls one of the battles of the Wars of the Roses.

Dessie itself has something of the character of an alpine *Kurort*, and the Italians intended to develop it as such. When I was there the fairly numerous Italian colony was being removed to Asmara, and it was obvious that the town was gradually reverting to the untidy agglomeration of huts and shanties which is all the easy-going Ethiopian countryman requires in a town.

The surrounding grassy *alms* are the finest stock-raising country in Africa. Between the surrounding peaks of the uplands I have ridden for 3 or 4 miles over turf as flat as a race-course. I had the pleasant task of running a reception camp for surrendered Italian mules and ponies, and I was free to spend a good deal of time in the saddle under fresh wind-swept skies which recalled an English June.

The road from Dessie to Debra Tabor descends and ascends the canyon of the Bashilo and crosses the plateau of Debra Zebit. Magdala, the fortress capital of the Emperor Theodore, lies to the south-west, and the route from the Bashilo to Debra Zebit is the reverse of that taken by Napier in 1868, when he made his remarkable march up from the Red Sea. After Debra Zebit the route crosses the panhandle which forms the watershed between the Bashilo flowing to the Blue Nile and the northward-flowing Takkaze. Farther on towards Debra Tabor, with the incline down to the Lake Tana basin, the vegetation becomes richer. Snipe abound and are so tame that they could almost be killed with a stick.

In the mountains to the south-east of Debra Tabor is the curious anarchic community known as the Republic of Gaint, whose people claim to recognize no authority. The late Captain Pilkington and Captain McLean, who were organizing the tribes south and east of Lake Tana, managed to establish very friendly contact with the Gaint people.

Many hard things have been said about the Abyssinians. Some people have found it difficult to get on with them; but it is notable that foreigners who have spent some time with them are generally happy in their company. Under the name of Abyssinian, or of Ethiopian which they themselves prefer, are included people as varied as the Amhara and the Galla; the Hararene and the Tigraian; the Shoan and the Agau. It is worth giving an individual impression of these different groups.

The Amhara racial type includes both the Amhara and the Shoan, and, to a great extent also, the Gojjami. The Amhara are the dominant racial stock of the central Ethiopian Highland rather than the ruling caste of Ethiopia. There are plenty of poor Amhara villagers. The Amhara are described as of Hamitic origin; but from the earliest times there has been a strong infusion

2: Allen G-5 (1941) 1943 MP5 Amhara MP5
Tulama MP25

T 105 T A 563 175

imperial power revived, Emperors like Theodore and, later, Menelik, re-established Amhara rule first over the central highland and later over all the Galla lands of the south. The most formidable resistance encountered by Menelik was from the Moslem Galla Sultan of Jimma. From time to time certain Galla districts resented the corrupt or vicious government of individual Amhara officials and revolted; but these revolts were the common phenomenon of a feudal state of society rather than the beginnings of a conscious Galla movement against an alien Amhara rule. In fact in the Galla countries of the south the rule of the Amhara central government has proved more stable than in the north where it had to meet the challenge of powerful Amhara lords. During the dangerous revolt of Ras Gugsa Wolye it was probably the Galla contingents which saved the throne for Haile Selassie. During the campaign of 1941 thousands of Galla guerrillas took the field against the Italians, while the northern leaders, the great Amhara aristocrats, were inclined to wait on the winner.

T 105 A 563 [198]

Gallas are everywhere in Ethiopia and there are probably few Amhara nobles who have not a strong tinge of Galla blood in their veins. Most Amhara have some knowledge of Galla (although many will not own to it), and Galla is popularly supposed to be the "love language" of Ethiopia.

I had little opportunity for investigating the subject, but I do not believe that all Galla-speaking tribes are racially Galla. In the belt of savannah country between the Mussolini Pass and Dessie I met the two sons of a Wallo Galla headman who were a pair of the most beautiful human beings I have ever seen. Copper-skinned and lithe, clad in panther pelts and leaning on their spears, they seemed apparitions out of the Bronze Age. These boys were of pure Hamitic type, rather resembling some of the fine-featured Shluh of the Moroccan Atlas. Yet, in Harar, where I had to disband a battalion of Galla Patriots who had come in from the south, I found stocky square-headed men with heavy jowls, with a fair proportion of negroid types. Incidentally they were reported to show excellent form as soldiers. They were mostly Borana and other southern Gallas.

The variety of physical types among the Gallas adds to the mystery of their origin before the sixteenth century. Some tribes have the tradition of having arrived on the east coast of Africa from over the sea, and one theory postulates the coming of the Galla from Madagascar and attempts to correlate their migration with the intrusion of Malay elements into that island. At present the origin of the Gallas remains one of the most interesting problems of African history.

A 633

Harar itself has, since mediaeval times, enjoyed the situation of a city-state. The emirate of Harar was brought within the Ethiopian Empire only by Ras Makonnen, the father of the present Emperor. It has since remained a favourite city of the Imperial family and a stronghold of their interest. On the edge of the Somali and the Galla country and commanding the way down over the lip of the Southern Escarpment into the Awash valley Harar is a meeting place for all the tribes of Ethiopia and the Arabian coast. The old walled city with its narrow crowded streets and occasional mosques and *turbés* has all the characteristics of an Arabian town, as contrasted with the open settlements of huts, gardens, and plantations which pass for towns in

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

developed. I was interested to find, when first exploring this piece of country, that the shelves were well populated, intensively cultivated, and provided with a quite surprising number of churches; facts, as pointed out below, of some historical significance.

After completing the framework of the map I made several calculations of depth in the Beressa gorge. An Abney level was used and as high angles were involved I think the results are trustworthy. They showed a depth of 1808 feet at the point marked *a*, just under 3 miles from the head of the gorge; 1985 feet at point *b*, 4 miles down; and 2170 feet at *c*, not quite 6 miles down. The average gradient from *a* to *b* was therefore about 2¼ per cent., from *b* to *c* about 2 per cent. The depths were measured from three points (marked 1–3), all at practically the same level, on the edge of the gorge, the height of which can be taken as about 9300 feet. The absolute level of point *c* is therefore about 7130 feet, and this is almost the lowest point on the sheet. Measurements show that the depth of this gorge, enormously impressive though it is, is not more than one-fifth of its breadth. Although relatively deeper ones no doubt exist, I cannot help being highly sceptical of Rocher d'Hericourt's report of a ravine "14 leagues north-west of Angolala" which he alleged to be 1254 metres deep and only 800 broad!

Four separate gorges figure on the map. The two middle ones, formed by the Beressa and Dalecha rivers, which enclose between them the cliff-encircled plateau of Choli, can be seen to join within 4 to 5 miles of Debra Berhan. It might be supposed that the other two gorges were destined to join the same system within a short distance, but this does not happen. If the small-scale Italian map is to be trusted, the Gunagunit (north-east corner of the sheet) joins the Beressa system some 20 miles away, and the Chacha (of which the north-western gorge is a tributary) nearly 30 miles away. These junctions are approximately north of Debra Berhan; afterwards the river bends away north-westwards to join a main tributary of the Blue Nile. As might be expected, these independent gorge-systems running approximately parallel to each other proved most confusing. Between the adjacent systems one sees long, narrow strips of residual plateau, perfectly flat-topped, sometimes so narrow as to stand up like a wall between one valley and the next. The Tallak Amba plateau, partly shown in the north-west of the sheet, is an example. On the other side of the sheet a still narrower neck, followed by the Tegulet path, separates the Beressa and Gunagunit systems. Following this route to the north, off the sheet, one finds that for some distance the plateau has been cut right away: one descends about 600 feet to a point where the shelves in two adjacent valleys practically coalesce, being separated only by a rocky barrier a few feet high. Then one climbs again to a narrow slip of plateau on whose summit, flat as a table-top, stands an important church (Zendegur Ghiorghis). Still farther north this narrows down to a sinuous rampart between the valleys, and eventually broadens once more to form a substantial isolated plateau, which appeared in the distance to be almost inaccessible. Another remarkable feature, jutting out between the Dalecha and the small tributary which next joins the Beressa, is shown near the northern border of the sheet and will be described later.

This region is the heart of the old Shoan kingdom and many places included

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

on the sheet, or not far from it, have historical associations. Tegulet, a little to the north, was the home country of Yikuno Amlak, the Shoan prince in whose person the Solomonian line was restored to the throne of Ethiopia in the thirteenth century. Debra Berhan itself, now a rather sordid settlement on the Asmara road, is of ancient foundation, for the emperor Zar'a Yakob made it his capital in the fifteenth century. Although a somewhat cold and inhospitable place it has an obvious advantage as commanding what must always have been an important focus of routes. Even in modern times it was inevitable that the Asmara road should be brought through this easy passage, avoiding the impassable gorges on the one hand and the much broken country of the higher plateau on the other.

Although there is no proof, and apparently no relevant tradition, I should be inclined to attribute to Zar'a Yakob some curious caves excavated in one end of a high hogsback 2 miles south-east of Debra Berhan. Unfortunately I inspected them only once and rather casually and found no opportunity to come again. There are at least two very elaborate excavations, besides some rougher ones, now partly inhabited. The two principal caves are very similar in lay-out. Entering by a roughly rounded lobby, one passes through a small hole in the rock, which admits scarcely any daylight, into the principal interior space. This is approximately circular and perhaps 25 feet in diameter. On the far side, opposite the entrance, it communicates with a smaller chamber semi-circular in form. From the main space a passage leads off, in the first cave to the right, in the second to the left; these receive no daylight at all. In the first cave the passage (which was half under water) turned twice to the right and was thus bent back on itself. It opened into several miniature cells, in shape an erect oval and only big enough for a man to stand in, each of which appeared to have opened through a small hole at the top into an upper space of some kind. The passage belonging to the second cave had basin-shaped excavations in its floor opening through small holes into spaces below. I therefore conjectured that I had here got into an upper passage such as apparently existed above the other system. Possibly these were underground chapels inspired by rock-excavated churches of the Lalibela school. As to the passages and the small spaces leading off them, with what seemed to be their ventilating arrangements, they might have been stores of some kind, or burial chambers, or special places of devotion, or hermits' cells—but these are speculations. If the mud which chokes these caves were removed something definite might be found out about them. They found a use quite recently, for at the time of the Italian invasion *tabots* and other church valuables were said to have been hidden in them.

In the first half of the sixteenth century the Shoan plateau, in common with a large part of Ethiopia, was occupied by Galla tribes invading from the south. These Gallas were essentially horsemen and herdsmen, and it seems that, while they occupied the entire plateau, they did not seriously attempt to penetrate the gorges, into which even a mule descends with difficulty. I believe that the Amhara population became forcibly concentrated in the upper reaches of the gorges at this time, and that the dense population which resulted explains the extraordinary number of churches which came to be built there. Even to-day the greater part of the plateau between Addis

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

Ababa and Debra Berhan remains Galla country. The Amharas have re-occupied the region immediately around Debra Berhan, their southern limit corresponding roughly with the edge of the sheet; but the churches built to meet their needs (including the new St. Gabriel already once mentioned) are comparatively few and far between, a confirmation of the recent date of the re-colonization.

The Gallas remained in possession of the plateau country until the early nineteenth century when Sahele Selassie, king of Shoa, began to push them back. The half-dozen hill-top forts shown on the sheet almost certainly date from this time, or were reoccupied then. The capital of Shoa since the eighteenth century had been Ankober, on the edge of the great eastern escarpment, some 20 miles east of Debra Berhan. But Sahele Selassie, as part of his anti-Galla campaign founded, in about 1830, a new capital at Angolala in the midst of Galla country. He thereafter divided his time between Angolala and Ankober. A largely disused track, still well-defined in most parts, is shown crossing the sheet from Angolala in an easterly direction; this was evidently an old route joining the two capitals. Harris,[1] who conducted a British Mission to Sahele Selassie in 1841–42, visited Angolala which then contained four or five hundred huts. He also describes Sahele Selassie's two-storied "palace," built by an Albanian [2] visitor, standing on an eminence—which however the king would not inhabit, from fear of earthquakes. Angolala continued to be used by Sahele Selassie's son, king Haile Malakot, and the great Menelik, who was Haile Malakot's son, had been born here in 1843—just after the time of Harris's visit.

Not much remains now to show that Angolala was so recently the twin capital of Shoa; but the site of Sahele Salassie's house, an artificial mound crowning the ridge, is easily identified and commands a fine view of the countryside. Inside the mound is a vaulted cellar, its masonry showing clear signs of European workmanship, as also does the central stone-built element of the local church of Kidane Meheret. This work is now exposed to view as the church was burnt down during the Italian occupation. Angolala remains a well-populated area, but only a very few huts now stand among the remains of defensive walls near the old royal residence.

The young Menelik, up to the age of twelve, must have known all this country well. But at that time (1855) the newly crowned emperor Theodore, whose ambition was the unification of Ethiopia after a century and a half of anarchy and internal strife, came down from the north with the object of subjecting Shoa to his personal rule. He defeated king Haile Malakot on the plains of Atakilt, the irrigated area just south-east of Debra Berhan. Haile Malakot died immediately after the battle, and Menelik was carried away captive by Theodore—who, however, afterwards treated him as a son rather than a prisoner. For some years Menelik followed in the emperor's train, moving with him from Gondar to Debra Tabor and then to the hill-fortress of Magdala, Theodore's last capital and later the scene of his undoing. Several years before Napier's siege of 1868 Menelik had escaped from Magdala during, it is said, one of Theodore's periodic orgies. A youth in

[1] Harris, 'The Highlands of Aethiopia,' London, 1844.
[2] It is much more likely that Harris meant an Armenian.

3: Buxton Y-5 (1946-1948)1949 MP5 Amhara MP5

his early twenties, he found his way back to Ankober and assumed his rights as king of Shoa.

Menelik, who was a restless and imaginative character as well as a great soldier, soon began the series of vast conquests in the southern Galla lands which were to double the size of Ethiopia. It is therefore not surprising that he should have abandoned Ankober in favour of a capital within easier reach of his newly acquired territories. He first reverted to Debra Berhan, then made a new temporary capital at Liché, a few miles to the north-east. Here, at one end of a long, low hill are various remains of massive dry-stone walls as at Angolala, and the raised platform, only about 20 feet across, on which stood Menelik's personal dwelling. But the site is now uninhabited. In the 1880's Menelik, his southern conquests rapidly extending, moved his capital south-westwards to Entotto, in the midst of country newly retrieved from the Gallas. This was a magnificent site, 10,000 feet high and overlooking the plain and the splendid circle of mountains which form the setting of the present capital. Entotto was, however, unsuitable as the site of a permanent city. It is said, also, that Menelik's wife Taitu craved for a warmer residence and especially for the curative waters of the hot springs (the present Fil Wuha baths) on the edge of the plain below. So in 1889, the year in which he was crowned emperor in succession to John IV, Menelik moved down, and Addis Ababa was founded at the foot of the hills, 1500 feet below.

This digression completes our brief review of the historical associations of the area represented on the map. The remainder of this paper will deal with the present inhabitants, their distribution and their way of life.

It has already been said that the population of the area is greater than at first sight appears. The small, stone-built huts are inconspicuous objects, especially as they are seldom massed together to form a village but are widely scattered in small groups. Moreover the motor-road follows for the most part an exposed tract which carries less than the normal population. Travellers driving through therefore carry away a false impression: they can see little of the more populated areas, nothing of the gorges, and not a single one of the numerous churches of the region, except those of Debra Berhan itself.

I attempted to mark every inhabited place on the map. In very many cases the single dot indicates several households, and may be taken to represent, on an average, two households of five to six persons each or eleven souls. On this basis the population of the whole area of 102 square miles comes to about 15,500 or 152 per square mile—a high average by African standards. (This excludes Debra Berhan itself which would add a further 2000 or so.) The population is not, however, evenly distributed, and the area may be divided into three parts which, with their areas and population densities (again ignoring Debra Berhan) are as follows:

General plateau: 60 square miles—116 per square mile.

Plateau between or within 1 km. of gorges: 22 square miles—240 per square mile.

The gorges themselves: 20 square miles—162 per square mile. (This indicates a very high concentration on the "shelves" and a few other favoured spots, for a great part of the gorge area is, of course, uninhabitable.)

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

Abuna, Tecla Haimanout knew that very soon no set of people would be more shamefully ignorant than those priests, even in the most common dogmas of their profession. He hoped, therefore, by a considerable stipend, to tempt some men of learning to accept of this place, to give his countenance to learning and religion among them.

The Arabic canon*, which is preserved by the Abyssinian church, and said to be of the council of Nice, should certainly be attributed to this Abuna, and is a forgery in, or very soon after, his time; for, it is plain this canon took place about the year 1800, that it was lawful to elect an Abuna, who was a native of Abyssinia before this prohibition, otherwise it would not have been applied. Abuna Tecla Haimanout was an Abyssinian by birth, and he was Abuna; the prohibition, therefore, had not then taken place: but, as no Abyssinian was afterwards chosen, it must certainly be a work of his time; for it is impossible a canon should be made by the council of Nice, settling the rank of a bishop in a nation, which, for above 200 years after that general council, were not Christians.

As the Abuna very seldom understands the language, he has no share of the government, but goes to the palace on days of ceremony, or when he has any favour to ask, or complaint to make. He is much fallen in esteem from what he was formerly, chiefly from his own little intrigues, his ignorance, avarice, and want of firmness. His greatest employment is in ordinations. A number of men and children present themselves at a distance, and there stand, from humility, not daring to approach him. He then asks who these are? and they tell him that they want to be deacons. On this, with a small iron cross in his hand,

* See Ludolf, lib. iii. cap. 2. No. 17.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

than the Abuna. There are, after these, chief priests and scribes, as in the Jewish church: the last of these, the ignorant, careless copiers of the holy scriptures. 793

The monks here do not live in convents, as in Europe, but in separate houses round their church, and each cultivates a part of the property they have in land. The priests have their maintenance assigned to them in kind, and do not labour. A steward, being a layman, is placed among them by the king, who receives all the rents belonging to the churches, and gives to the priests the portion that is their due; but neither the Abuna, nor any other churchman, has any business with the revenues of churches, nor can touch them. 793 794

The articles of the faith of the Abyssinians have been inquired into and discussed with so much keenness in the beginning of this century, that I fear I should disoblige some of my readers were I to pass this subject without notice. 175 ● 779

Their first bishop, Frumentius, being ordained about the year 333, and instructed in the religion of the Greeks of the church of Alexandria by St Athanasius, then sitting in the chair of St Mark, it follows, that the true religion of the Abyssinians, which they received on their conversion to Christianity, is that of the Greek church; and every rite, or ceremony, in the Abyssinian church may be found and traced up to its origin in the Greek church, while both of them were orthodox.

Frumentius preserved Abyssinia untainted with heresy till the day of his death. We find, from a letter preserved in the works of St Athanasius, that Constantius, the heretical Greek emperor, wished St Athanasius to deliver him up, which that patriarch refused to do: indeed, at that time, it was not in his power.

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

● 175 779 Soon after this, Arianism, and a number of other heresies, each in their turn, were brought by the monks from Egypt, and infected the church of Abyssinia. A great part of these heresies, in the beginning, were certainly owing to the difference of the languages in those times, and especially the two words Nature and Person, than which no two words were ever more equivocal in every language into which they have been translated. Either of these words, in our own language, is a sufficient example of what I have said; and, in fact, we have adopted them from the Latin. If we had adopted the signification of these words in religion from the Greek, and applied the Latin words of Person and Nature to common and material cases, perhaps we had done better. Neither of them has ever yet been translated into the Abyssinian, so as to be understood to mean the same thing in different places. This for a time was, in a certain degree, remedied, or understood, by the free access they had, for several ages, both to Cairo and Jerusalem, where their books were revised and corrected, and many of the principal orthodox opinions inculcated. But, since the conquest of Arabia and Egypt by Sultan Selim, in 1516, the communication between Abyssinia and these two countries hath been very precarious and dangerous, if not entirely cut off; and now, as to doctrine, I am perfectly convinced they are in every respect to the full as great heretics as ever the Jesuits represented them. And I am confident, if any Catholic missionaries attempt to instruct them again, they will soon lose the use of letters, and the little knowledge they yet have of religion, from the prejudice only, and fear of incurring a danger they are not sufficiently acquainted with to follow the means of avoiding it.

779 The two natures in Christ, the two persons, their unity, their equality, the inferiority of the manhood,

5: Bruce T-5 (1768-1773) 1804
MP5 Amhara MP5

[pp. 1-62, Vol. 7 have not been processed for the files. - Analyst]

APPENDIX

TO

BOOKS VII. AND VIII.

No. I.

Detached Articles from the several Journals and Common-place Books, containing additional information respecting Abyssinia *.

175 YASOUS TALLACK (the Great) subdued Lasta, and obliged it to pay 1000 ounces of gold per annum in tribute. It continued to pay till the war between Mariam Barea and Ras Michael, when each pretending to it, it became independant, and continues so at this present day, April 1770.

Harar is four days journey from Shoa, and seven from Aussa. It is farther inland, and a plain country. The chief has the title of Emir; and is frequently at war with Amha Yasous in Shoa, who is independant. The people are all Mahometans, called Turks by the Abyssinians.

317 Gold is found in the Shangalla's country in small lumps, is by them put into quills, and carried to Damot fair. This, at least, was the ancient custom when these barbarians sold their gold as neces-ity required. Since that time they have got scales and weights, and know, in general, the value.—The Agows are the purchasers, and adulterate it with silver;

* The paragraphs marked with N. B. by the Editor.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

many of the smaller units retained, like them, much of their old historical and cultural identity. 635

The provinces do not fall very easily into administrative categories. The deepest distinction is that which has just been mentioned between the dominant Christian provinces of the old Ethiopia and those of the south which were, in the main, conquered by the Shoan dynasty during the second half of the last century. The dividing line runs approximately along the Blue Nile and across the middle of the modern Shoa, a little to the north of the capital. The region around the capital, though it lay just south of this line, may be regarded as having, since the reign of Sahla Selassié (1813), been progressively assimilated to Amharic society. In the vast area north of the line, below the structure of imperial power and that of the dominating and shifting ruling families there lay, still largely intact, the variegated social design of the Tigré and Amhara groups, closely interwoven with that of the ancient church and sanctioned by long custom. South of this line were Muslim and pagan people, many newly conquered, some of them partially disintegrated and dispossessed by their conquest, and all subject to a far more direct rule under the Shoan Emperor and his agents than was possible in the north. In both groups of provinces there were exceptional areas such as those of the northern Gallas, but it will be more convenient to give the Gallas a chapter to themselves as part of the south. The non-Galla southern provinces must be sub-divided into three groups, the Sidamo Hamites, the negro, and those Danakil and Somali regions, where the semi-desert nature of the country and the nomadic life of the tribes frustrated effective control by the Amharas. The northern provinces are sufficiently homogeneous for us to consider them, in very general terms, as a whole. A discussion of the administration of the provinces must be preceded by an attempt to assess the numbers and distribution of the people. 175● 563 635

The main facts of the ethnology of the region have appeared in their place in the historical introduction, but it may be useful to bring together here some of these scattered facts. We saw that a mainly Hamitic (or Cushitic) population, with negro fringes and pockets, was dominated in successive southward moving stages by those northern groups which had been mastered and stimulated by Semitic emigrants from Arabia, and how this mixed Semitic-Hamitic people had gradually spread its domination over the northern half of the present boundaries to make the Ethiopian state and nation. It has been recounted how Christianity came in the fourth century and how the great movement of Galla peoples from the east and south-east, aided by the Muslim invasions of the sixteenth century, flooded into large areas of Ethiopia. 175 563

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

175 563 In the nineteenth century, as will be recounted in some detail in the chapter on the southern provinces, the Ethiopians, and especially the Shoans, struck back and overran an immense area inhabited by Gallas, Somalis, non-Semiticized Hamites, and negroes in the south.

THE POPULATION

162 No census has ever been taken in Ethiopia and we cannot, therefore, know either the total of population within her boundaries or how to allocate the numbers to the several races, religions, and regions. All estimates are therefore nothing better than more or less informed guesses. To show the divergences in these guesses, a well-informed British consul writing in 1932 gave 5,500,000 as his figure,[1] whereas, since the liberation, a semi-official Ethiopian journal claims 12,000,000 to 13,000,000. A recent official statement by the ecclesiastical authorities claims 10,000,000 Ethiopian Christians.[2]

Special attention must be paid to the estimates of the Italians. As neighbours, adversaries and, for a short time, rulers of Ethiopia, they have had more reason and opportunity than other people to attempt such calculations.

The following estimates, obviously in very round numbers, are the official Italian figures. They cover the whole of Italian East Africa and it will therefore be necessary to consult Map 2 at the end of the book in order to see the relationship of this area with Ethiopia proper.

Province.	Population
Shoa	500,000
Eritrea	1,000,000
Amhara	1,000,000
Harar	1,600,000
Galla-Sidamo	1,600,000
Somalia	1,300,000
	7,000,000[3]

The following figures for the same area, published in the *Guida* of 1938, give the racial distribution.

[1] Makereth, p. 5.
[2] *Herald*, 1 July 1946.
[3] *Annuario dell'Africa Orientale Italiana*, Rome, 1938–9, p. 597.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

and I saw them together, and they appeared to be good friends. (God knows their hearts.)'[1] 'And it is so usual', wrote d'Almeyda in the next century, 'for the Emperor to chop, change, and take . . . the lands any man has and to bestow them on another, that it is never thought much of, and very often one plows, another sows, and a third reaps.'[2] Yet practice was never quite the same as theory. The Emperor's claim to make grants of land and office depending solely upon his will waxed and waned according to the changing balance of the social and political forces. Thus we find Ludolphus, while stating the general rule, remarking that there were some prefectures which the Emperor would have to bestow upon another member of the same family. He names six of these, including that of the *Bahr-nagash* and the *Wag-Shum*. Ludolphus has more to tell of the Emperor's views on this question. 'Moreover they presume that Hereditary Dignity is an obstacle to Virtue; that Men are more certainly made, than born great; and that they will prove more faithful, whom they have raised from the Dust, than such as claim their fortunes from their Ancestors.'[3]

To trace the changing movements in this tug-of-war would require a recapitulation of the involved internal struggles, battles of kites and crows, which fill the chronicles and the political details of which are no more interesting than those of our Wars of the Roses. Only a few important phases need be picked out. From d'Almeyda and Ludolphus we must pass on to the eighteenth century, when the royal power fell very low. Ras Mikael of Tigré, who dominates Bruce's story as Satan dominates Paradise Lost, was not a man an Emperor could dismiss; on the contrary he himself dismissed, and, indeed, murdered, more than one Emperor. At this time, even the Gallas of Damot could insist upon the son of the former Galla governor succeeding to the governorship and they killed the Emperor's uncle who was sent to take over the province.[4] The kingdom of Shoa, as we saw in the historical introduction, was all but independent, and though its rulers paid lip service to the King of Kings in Gondar, none of these dared challenge the solid power and hereditary succession of this dynasty.

The Galla mayors of the palace at Gondar struggled to raise the power of the decadent Solomonian rulers. One of these attempts to curb the growth of hereditary succession to offices and lands and to make a bid for the favour of the people against their lords, is of special interest in our context. Ras Gugsa passed the following decree in 1800:

'The land belongs to God. Man has only its usufruct. He fertilizes it by his labours: he passes: it swallows him and grows green again in

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 93. [2] Tellez, p. 63. [3] Ludolphus, p. 235.
[4] Jones and Monroe, pp. 122–3.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

● 175 the sun. Who then dares to call himself the owner of something stronger than himself? Holders of fiefs: lords of Provinces, listen: there is no more hereditary suzerainty. God alone has possession always. He gives sovereign right to whom he pleases. He has given it to me. . . . I am master of the soil. . . . Noble ladies and lords, holders of fiefs, present yourselves! I give rank and investiture. . . . Labourers, labour! Merchants, continue your traffic! It is I who am your might and your strength.'[1] It is said that the immediate effect of this decree was to turn most of the lesser nobility into soldiers of fortune, but this might have happened in any case in the disorders of the early nineteenth century.

Ras Ali, whom Plowden found in power, ruling with a puppet king, showed the monarchy at its weakest; Ras Oubié of Tigré was at least his equal and brooked no interference, though he sent in a token tribute. Even Ras Ali, in the Emperor's name, still claimed 'the right of appointing all other chiefs of provinces and officers of every kind at his will and pleasure'.[2] But many great families, his equals by birth, had their own armies, and in appointing a governor of a province he was obliged to be attentive to the claims of great families who, from hereditary influence, must be either rulers or rebels in their respective districts.[3]

After the disorders and decline of nearly a century, Theodore tried to revive the imperial authority. His methods were characteristic; they showed the vigour and genius which was so tragically ruined by his violence. 'The arduous task', wrote Plowden, 'of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task in Europe achieved only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous. . . . He has placed the soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish; thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains more proud of their birth than of their monarchy, and organizing a new nobility, a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen especially for their daring and fidelity.'[4] Even the *W'ag-Shum* was not spared from seizure.

Theodore's successor, John, for all his great military ability, had at times to treat the kings of Shoa and Gojjam almost as equals. Menelik, though never so violent as Theodore, was able in his prime—but only then—to exert his authority over the provincial governors. An official report of 1906 states that he could at any moment take away the territory of the highest ras and put him in chains without giving any reasons for his action. The extent and also the limits of his power in relation to the great ruling families of the north were shown in his treatment of

[1] Salviac, M. de, *Les Galla*, Paris, 1902, p. 37.
[2] Hotten, p. 116. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 181. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

7: Perham S-4 (no date)1948
MP5 Amhara MP5

Gojjam when its king, Takla Haimanot, died in 1901. He wished to break up this large kingdom, but he did so only partially, leaving the eastern part to the son of the dead king. He also made it a habit to keep powerful chiefs waiting about at court, a favourite method of French kings and one that Theodore had applied to him in his own youth. The *Wag-Shum* was again deprived of his ancient hereditary succession by the Empress Taitu, in favour of her own nominee; but the *Shum* was later restored. As Menelik's physical power declined, so did his control until, during his last years, the provincial governors again became largely independent. Imperial authority over the governors declined still further under the unstable Lij Yasu, and was only very gradually restored in a new form by Haile Selassié.

We have seen that even the present Emperor had to pay some attention to the hereditary position of great families in those northern regions which had a traditional jealousy of Shoa and in which opposition and rebellion were most likely to appear. In his early days as Regent the provincial governors still remained very independent. Ras Hailu, for instance, did not come near the capital for years. Provincial tribute was very low. Chiefs were allowed to rule the country with which their family had been associated until some misdeed or act of disloyalty brought deposition. Hence Haile Selassié confirmed Ras Hailu in his father's position in Gojjam, and punished his contumacy with disinheritance and imprisonment only later when he was strong enough for this action. Similarly he felt obliged to confirm Ras Seyum in his ancestral lordship of Tigré. It was the decision to grant Ras Seyum, at the expense of his cousin *Dejazmach* Haile Selassié Gugsa, the lion's share of the family lands, which threw the latter into the arms of the Italians in 1935. Ras Gugsa Wallié's position in the provinces of Lasta and Bagemdir was based upon family connections, and when he was killed during his rebellion in 1930 the substitution of Ras Kassa was appropriate because of his connection with the former rulers of Lasta through his mother. Ras Kassa's son was made governor of Bagemdir in 1942 in recognition, presumably, of the family connection.

The present Emperor himself might be given as the representative of a branch of the royal line which has held the great province of Harar since his father Ras Makonnen conquered it and was confirmed in its lordship by his cousin Menelik. The lands and governorship of this province were inherited by Makonnen's eldest son and, upon his death, went to the younger brother, Tafari. Though Lij Yasu, when he came of age, transferred this potential rival to a south-west province, Tafari had left behind him in Harar an army that was loyal to his house, and when the clash came it rallied to him and Lij Yasu lost his throne.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

That the whole fabric of the original tenets of their Church is overlaid with a mass of gross superstition is unfortunately only too obvious; it is due, doubtless, to the vicissitudes through which the Church has passed, to the perpetual and invincible ignorance of the bulk of the priesthood, and to the composite nature of their Church tradition, consisting, as it does, of a pagan, Egyptian, Jewish, Coptic, and Latin evolution. That elements of all these forms of worship enter into their present-day religion cannot be doubted by those who have witnessed their ceremonies, examined their ecclesiastical robes and furniture, and studied their customs. And, indeed, it would be strange if it were not so, for this ancient people are themselves a combination of a number of different strains and races, drawn from both Asia and Africa, combining to form not only an interesting historical study, but a curious and baffling modern problem in the world of to-day, into which they have only comparatively recently emerged.

Originally pagan of course, the country adopted Judaism nearly 1000 B.C., and about the time of the birth of Christ the mythological beliefs of Greece appear to have been introduced, without, however, effecting the supersession of the Jewish faith.

It was in the early part of the fourth century (A.D. 330 is the generally accepted date) that the conversion of Ethiopia from Judaism to Christianity is reported to have been effected as the result of the visit to that country of some shipwrecked Christians. Being successful in converting the sovereign and the Court, they aspired to extend their sway over the whole country, and accordingly one of them returned to Egypt, obtained the assistance of the Alexandrian authorities, was

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

nominated Bishop of Ethiopia, and induced the Abyssinian people to join the Alexandrian or Coptic branch of the Church.

According to Abyssinian tradition the first introduction of Christianity took place at an even earlier date. It is alleged that Matthew the Evangelist visited the northern districts of the country about A.D. 30 and attempted the conversion of the people; apparently, however, he made only few converts to the new doctrines and was eventually turned out. A further slight extension of the new faith is claimed to have been made a few years later; indeed Alvarez, writing in 1527, refers to Ethiopian books and traditions which describe Candace as the first Christian queen of the country and as having had her principal residence near Axum. Her conversion was alleged to have been due to a eunuch in her service who was sent by her to Jerusalem, and there met with Philip and was baptized by him as narrated in the Acts of the Apostles. This would be about A.D. 34, or some three hundred years before the generally accepted date.

I do not propose to enter into the merits of this latter claim, nor even into the claim that Abyssinia became christianized by divine inspiration during Christ's childhood without the aid of any missionaries (!); nor is it my purpose to trace the history of the Church from its inception up to now. Suffice it to say that it has passed through many vicissitudes, and that for hundreds of years the Abyssinians had to fight for the maintenance of their religion against external and internal foes. The main attacks were the great Moslem invasion of 1528 which swept over the country and all but engulfed it, followed by the invasion of the pagan

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

Galla, which came very near to being successful and which would in that event have resulted in blotting out Christianity in the country. And finally, the third attack on their particular form of Christianity, though not on Christianity itself, came from the Portuguese missionaries, who, arriving towards the middle of the sixteenth century, produced a good deal of effect on the religious life of the country. They actually succeeded in inducing one king to renounce the Alexandrian doctrine, to profess publicly his belief in Roman Catholicism, and to proclaim this faith as the national religion. But the success was short-lived; public opinion, bitterly outraged, would not tolerate the supersession of the old doctrines, and the king was compelled to restore the national faith by public proclamation. His son, who succeeded him shortly afterwards, completed the work by expelling the Jesuits.

In spite of these attacks the Abyssinians retain their faith unaltered to this day, though owing to their later conquests their rule extends over a larger number of non-Christian subjects than there are Abyssinians. The Somals, Danakil, and some of the Galla (in Harrar and Djimma) are Moslems; the Shankala and other Galla (in Boran, Arussi and Walega) are pagan, the latter believing in a form of supreme deity they call *Wak* or *Wakwe*, and a number of minor spirits or *Sarosh*. The Falasha are Jews.

Many of the Galla (in Wollo for example) were converted to Christianity by the Emperor Menelik, but his methods hardly seem to have been such as to inspire the converts with any profound or reasoned conviction of the merits of that faith. When he conquered a Galla country the inhabitants had to become Christians lest

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

worse should befall them, and the process was rapid and simple—immersion in the nearest stream, circumcision, and generally the tying of a piece of blue silk cord round the neck.

The form of Christianity professed by Abyssinia is the monophysite, which was condemned as a "heresy" by the Council of Chalcedon in 450. This doctrine recognizes only one nature in Christ, against the view which has maintained itself as orthodox that the divine and human natures co-existed in him. But in spite of the thunders of Chalcedon the Abyssinians have held to their doctrine, although controversies as to a single, dual, and even threefold nature have raged in the country right up to the time of Theodore, who possessed decided views on the subject, and exercised drastic methods in giving effect to them.

The Church is to all intents and purposes an independent one, its only link with the Coptic Church in Egypt, on which it is nominally dependent, being the appointment by Alexandria of the Archbishop, or Abouna: he is an Egyptian, and once appointed he is supposed never to leave the country.

Tradition relates that the appointment of a foreign Abouna was laid down as a cardinal principle by the great Abyssinian ecclesiastic and national saint, Tekla Haimanot, in the thirteenth century in order to maintain connection between Abyssinia and the outside world, and to avoid internal rivalry in the nomination to the headship of the Church. Be that as it may, the Abyssinians attach considerable importance to their connection with the Alexandrian Church through their Abouna; this may be gauged from the fact that the Treaty between England, Egypt, and Abyssinia, made

114 ETHIOPIA has attracted travelers from the earliest days of African exploration. Disease often played an important rôle in the success or failure of such travelers, and a considerable amount of information with regard to nosography may be gathered from their writings. As early as 1855 Meyer-Ahrens published a nosography of Ethiopia based on the information gleaned from travel books then available, and much of this information is still of considerable importance. Other early attempts at a nosography of this region, not covered by Meyer-Ahrens, may be mentioned: Courbon's (1861) thesis, which is very superficial, and Blanc's *Medical History of a Journey in Abyssinia* (1869). Blanc was attached as physician to the expedition sent to relieve a British Consul kept prisoner by King Theodore. Theodore had sent a letter to Queen Victoria and another to Napoleon III asking for an embassy. When both letters were ignored, all Europeans in Ethiopia were imprisoned in 1866. Blanc, although imprisoned for two years, had opportunity to act as physician to Theodore and other important Ethiopians and has given a very interesting, although under the circumstances quite naturally a somewhat prejudiced, account of diseases and customs among the Ethiopians.

● 175 In 1889 Menelik proclaimed himself Emperor of Ethiopia. The years that followed brought Ethiopia into bitter conflict with Italy. A treaty was signed between the two countries at Ucciali in 1889, and Menelik's cousin, Ras Makonnen, father of the present Emperor, was sent on a mission to Rome to obtain a loan for which the whole province of Harar was offered as security. Soon difficulties broke out again and in 1894 Menelik denounced the treaty of

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175 Ucciali. A wave of patriotism swept the country and armies were gathered to meet the Italian invasion. On March 1, the Italians were practically annihilated by a vastly superior Ethiopian Army.

177 Ethiopia had been put on the map. Menelik was interested in getting foreign help in a number of technical fields, and among the many technical experts traveling in the country during the next twenty years there were also a goodly number of physicians. The different diplomatic missions in the new capital, Addis Ababa, often had their own physicians and with Russian assistance the Emperor founded the first small hospital in the capital. Among the medical writers of this period were Chabaneix (1901), the well-known British medical historian, Charles Singer (1905), who traveled through southwestern Ethiopia to Addis Ababa in 1904, and the French Railway physician, Doreau (1909).

797 743 Mission societies sent medical missionaries to Ethiopia during the following years, and French and Greek physicians, particularly, settled more and more in the capital and in Dire-Dawa, the French railroad town on the Addis-Ababa-Jibuti line. The French Government opened a hospital in Harar and the Italian Government at first kept a clinic in Addis Ababa which, in the early thirties, was enlarged to "The Italian Hospital." Ras Tafari, who had governed as a regent, with Menelik's widow, Zauditu, as Empress, was crowned Emperor in 1930, under the name Haile Selassie I. During his reign Ethiopia slowly has been emerging as a modern state. He early realized that the health of his people was of vital importance for the future of the country. In 1924, he founded the Beit Saida Hospital, which he entrusted to the Swed-

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[For historical profiles of two regions of Ethiopia, Gondar and Manz, both significant in Amhara history, see category 116, pp. 18-46.]

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1
Tigre MN9

related to Ge'ez, the ancient and liturgical language of Ethiopia, much as Italian is related to Latin.[1] It was in Tigre country that, during the first seven centuries A.D., the kingdom of Aksum reached heights of civilization never again attained in Ethiopia's history. Because of the antiquity of their region and the glory of their past, the Tigre are to some extent the cultural aristocrats of Ethiopia.

The Amhara inhabit vast areas of what are today the provinces of Bagemder, Gojjam, Wallo, and Shoa. Their language, Amharic, is the official language of Ethiopia.* Since the beginning of what is called the restored Solomonid Dynasty (1270), all but one of the emperors of Ethiopia have been Amhara.† The exception was a Tigre, Emperor Yohānnes IV (1872–89), though he sojourned for many years at Dabra Tābor in Amhara country, and Amharic was commonly spoken at his court.

The differences between Amhara and Tigre culture have not yet been studied systematically. Even so, one can say that their differences are not nearly so great as what the two groups have in common. Language forms the chief difference. Like Ge'ez and Tigrinya, Amharic is a Semitic language, ultimately descended from old South Arabic, but Amharic has been molded to a greater degree by indigenous Cushitic tongues. Other differences relate to minor variations in custom, greater communal orientation in some Tigre areas, and differences in temperament. But the two groups share the legacy of Aksum, the Ethiopic alphabet, Ge'ez literature, Monophysite Christianity, similar political and social institutions, and the same style of life. One would be justified in treating their traditional Abyssinian culture as a unity, as virtually all authors have done in the past.

In this book, however, I have chosen to focus on Amhara culture as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia. This has been done, first of all, because of my limited competence to deal with Tigre materials, since I am neither familiar with Tigrinya nor fortunate enough to have done field work in Tigre areas. But a less fortuitous reason is that any serious account of contemporary Ethiopia must begin with the fact of Amhara dominance. With respect to numbers, true, the Amhara are in a minority: Amhara probably comprise no more than one-quarter of Ethiopia's total population (now estimated at around twenty-two million). Their dominance is to be measured, rather, in political and cultural terms. On the political side it is manifest in the perpetuation of the Amhara monarchy and the preponderance of Amhara in top political offices. On the cultural side it appears in the spread of Amhara customs throughout the empire by officials, soldiers, settlers, and teachers, and in

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* English is the second official language.

† A number of Amhara emperors since the mid-eighteenth century were partly of Galla stock, however.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

the continuous Amharization of the peoples of the empire through the required use of Amharic in schools and government offices and through the substitution of Amharic names for indigenous place-names in many parts of the country. If the national institutions and culture of Ethiopia are essentially Abyssinian, more particularly they are Amhara.[2]

The domination of Ethiopian national life by the Amhara, and the related fact that the modern Ethiopian nation was the creation of the Amhara and not of European colonists, are characteristics which distinguish Ethiopia from all other African societies. For Ethiopia is the only country in Africa with a large number of ethnic groups where one of these groups has imposed its rule and its language over the rest and has preserved indigenous national institutions, elites, and culture patterns from displacement by Western forms and authorities.

This condition has imparted a basically conservative tone to the character of public life in Ethiopia, especially when compared to the new nations of sub-Saharan Africa. Because Ethiopians did not have to participate in the postwar struggle for independence, they did not experience the rise of agitational politics or the related phenomenon of political parties or movements. As a corollary of this, the Ethiopian populace was not exposed to oratory promising dynamic social and economic changes, and therefore developed no mass base of support for populist leaders who might seek to promote more rapid forms of change.

Yet if modernization has proceeded more slowly in Ethiopia than elsewhere in Africa—and speed in such matters has at times been associated with recklessness—the pattern of virtually unbroken Amhara rule for at least seven centuries stands in refreshing contrast to the somewhat anguished struggle for nationality within the new nations. Elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa no indigenous cultural tradition exists at the national level. There are many degrees to this cultural fragmentation. At one extreme are countries such as the Ivory Coast which, with some sixty disparate tribal groups in a population of about three million, can as yet appeal only to French culture as a basis for unity at the national level. Somewhat less fragmented are the nations, like Nigeria, in which a small number of important tribal traditions dominate the national scene. Still more consolidated is Uganda, whose kingdom of Buganda has long supported a strong quasi-national tradition, but whose non-Baganda tribes have remained largely outside the pale.

In Ethiopia, by contrast, Amhara rule has long provided a minimal basis for national unity. While this rule has been secured by coercive means, it has accustomed the various tribes in Ethiopia to live under a common sovereignty and to some extent has enabled their leaders to communicate with one another by means of a common native tongue.

One need not be blind to the drawbacks of Amhara dominance to recog-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
Ethiopia MP1

E 175 563 A 175 648

nize in it these and other important advantages for Ethiopia. These drawbacks have been those of any imperialism. During the great Amhara expansion under Menelik (1889–1913), many peoples were maltreated. Independent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust. Those who held down the Amhara position in these occupied territories seized land from the indigenous peoples and exploited them much as would any invader. The unfavorable reputation of the Amhara in the non-Amhara provinces has been due largely to the example of these governors and soldiers whose worst impulses were at times allowed free play.

One can scarcely single out the Amhara for criticism because of their imperialistic behavior in the past. Nor is it fair to judge the Amhara people as a whole by the character of their provincial officials in conquered areas, any more than one may judge the British, French, Portuguese, or Russian people by the behavior of certain imperious and sadistic colonial administrators. This distinction was self-evident to more discriminating observers of the Ethiopian scene like Augustus Wylde, who wrote in 1901:

A [565] [701] [157]

> There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.[3]

Indeed, if any imperialism of modern times should be granted special consideration, it might be that of the Amhara. The Amhara were to some extent merely reconquering lands that had been taken from them in earlier centuries. Furthermore, they needed additional strength to help withstand threats to their own independence. Finally, it can also be argued that if the Amhara had not conquered the other peoples now within the Ethiopian boundaries some European power might have colonized them instead.

E 563 A 648

However one may assess the fact of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia, it is a given of the present situation. It is a fact that leads naturally to two outstanding questions. One concerns the relations between the Amhara and the non-Amhara peoples of the empire: is it possible for the latter to be integrated more effectively and justly into the texture of a common national life? If not, the present state of tribal calm may prove to be but a long prelude to a wasteful storm. The question demands serious and sustained inquiry by a number of scholars, Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

E 563 178 121 A 121

The other question concerns the nature of Amhara culture, as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia, and its implications for the processes of Ethiopia's modernization now at work and yet to come. To this question we now direct our attention.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

538 Amhara invention. Though exact documentation is not available on the mat-
19 ter, *qenē* appears to be one of the flowers of the literary renascence which
174 took place during the centuries following the ascendance of the Solomonid
[175] Dynasty. The earliest specimens of *qenē* extant date back to the reign of
[173] Emperor Eskender (1478–94).[6] Ethiopian traditions trace the invention of
[874] *qenē* to the work of a man named Tawānay, who is said to have lived in
Gojjam in the fourteenth century.[7] The important schools of *qenē* have al-
538 ways been located in Amhara country, primarily at the monasteries of Wā-
19 delā, Wāsharā, and Gonj in Gojjam Province. While the choristers of Tigre
[171] have long since mastered the canons of *qenē* composition in Ge'ez, the use
of wax and gold in the vernacular occurs much more often in Amharic than
in Tigrinya. Indeed, wax and gold is so important in Amharic that some
Amhara maintain that one does not properly speak the language unless he is
well versed in the art of exploiting its numerous ambiguities. One of the
[829] more common indictments of Tigre character by Amhara is that the Tigre
are "dry" (*daraq*); they say just what they feel and do not know how to be
ambiguous. Conversely, many Tigre as well as other non-Amhara people in
the empire complain about the excess of symbolism and subtlety in Amhara
discourse.

538 Educated Amhara traditionalists extol wax and gold as a unique creation
of their culture. One of them has written that *qenē* is as distinctive of Ethio-
pia's spiritual culture as *tēff*, a species of grass grown as a cereal grain only
in Ethiopia, is distinctive of her material culture.[8] They further maintain that
Ge'ez *qenē* contains a unique kind of wisdom, dark and deep. Instruction in
this occult art of verse composition has traditionally been regarded as propae-
deutic to the study of religious texts.* Partly this is because Ge'ez grammar,
which must be known in order to understand these texts, is normally taught
only in the schools of *qenē*. The more philosophical reason given, however, is
that by affording exercise in fathoming secrets it "opens the mind" and there-
by enhances the student's ability to approach the divine mysteries.

538 Important as such functions may be in the high culture of Ethiopia, wax
181 and gold represents more than a principle of poetic composition and a method
of spiritual gymnastics for a small class of literati. The ambiguity symbolized
by the formula *sam-ennā warq* colors the entire fabric of traditional Amhara
life. It patterns the speech and outlook of every Amhara. When he talks, his

538 * The course of instruction in *qenē* takes from two to five years, according to the talent of the
874 student and the degree of mastery he desires. Ge'ez grammar and *qenē* prosody are taught side by
876 side. The former, usually studied in the evening, is learned by rote. The latter is taught by
running the student step by step through the gamut of figures and stanza forms. Instruction by
example begins in the dark, before sunrise. The teacher extemporizes on a given theme in each of
the stanza forms. His productions are memorized and discussed. In the daytime each student
goes off by himself to a secluded place and composes one stanza. When finished—it may take him
all day to perfect a couplet—he recites it to the master, who makes appropriate critical comments.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

be many years later, as a learned priest or *dabtarā* or as a successful warrior or official, and some sort of reconciliation might be effected with his family. In either case, from a sociological viewpoint, the rebellious youth is merely preparing himself to take over one of the more specialized functions on which the wider social order depends. His break with his parents does not signify a revolt against society, but, if anything, a closer attachment to society through more intimate alliance with its highest values, religion and warfare.

Thus there has always been some room for the attainment of a new social identity in Abyssinia. Although the rigidity of paternal authority often meant that it must be attained through rebellion, the adolescent could eat his cake of defiance and still have his cake of loyalty; and the social system was well served thereby.

ADOLESCENCE IN CHANGING ETHIOPIA

The foregoing description of adolescence still obtains for the vast majority of Amhara youth today. Side by side with this traditional pattern of "growing up on the farm," however, a quite different pattern of childhood and adolescence has been developing in Addis Ababa and in some of the provincial capitals. This new pattern follows the course of experience provided by participation in the government school system. It has radically interrupted the traditional rhythm of growing up and has posed more integrative problems than it has yet been able to solve.

The Welfare School

Public education in Ethiopia prior to the Italian invasion represented a small but significant trickle of activity alongside the mainstream of traditional institutions. Perhaps some six to seven hundred boys and girls received the beginnings of a modern education in the government schools of Addis Ababa by 1935.[9] Many others received some elementary education in government provincial schools and in schools operated by foreign religious missions, though the latter never played as significant a role in Ethiopia as they did in colonial Africa.

During the occupation, Ethiopians were prevented from acquiring anything higher than elementary education, but the Italians did construct a number of school buildings for their own nationals which facilitated the growth of the Ethiopian school system after 1941. By 1944 there were some 25,000 pupils enrolled in government schools, a figure which rose to 60,000 by 1950 and reached 234,000 in 1963.[10]

The base of the Ethiopian educational program has been an eight-year elementary curriculum, the first four years being taught in Amharic and the

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642 643 565 authority, the emperor could never afford to ignore the hereditary claims of regional *bālābbāt* in dispensing favors and making appointments. He needed a minimum of support from regional lords who commanded devoted followers, and he could not with impunity alienate any number of these at a given time. In practice, imperial favor was accorded *both* on the basis of personal loyalty and military ability, and of ascriptive claims to rank based on birth. The exercise of imperial authority was often a question simply of confirming the leadership of a locally successful *bālābbāt*.

565 554 With regard to regionally based strength, on the other hand, birth was not a sufficient factor to assure a man a high position. (It was not even necessary, strictly speaking. Any man could attempt to build up a position of power by attracting followers. He had a much better chance, however—a chance to attain authority, and not merely force—if he came from a noted family.) If, as the son of an important lord, he inherited his father's position, he had to prove himself a suitable leader or risk being deposed by the men of the area. At the very least he had to withstand competition from his brothers. Thus, as we saw [175] in the history of Manz, two of Nagāssi's sons were deposed before the men of Manz found in Sebstē a leader worthy of his father's mantle. Military ability, political shrewdness, and lavish generosity toward one's followers were the decisive characteristics which, together with strong ambition, could enable the son of a *bālābbāt* to attract followers and make claims of his own. With adequate forces, he could even depose a regional governor and take his place, so long as he took possession of the official drum (*nagārit*) of the office.[88] For complete legitimation, however, it was usually necessary to secure con- [643] firmation of the rule of a locally successful *bālābbāt* by the emperor. This was the reason why Nagāssi is said to have journeyed to Gondar.

642 643 565 175 In terms of the distribution of political authority, then, Abyssinian history may be viewed as an oscillation between the emperor's efforts to define local nobles as his agents and their own efforts to attain continuity and autonomy. The available sources concerning the emperors of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries suggest that their efforts were to a large extent successful. The ensuing "barbarian invasions" so weakened the empire that a more locally centered distribution of power became inevitable. At first only the scope of the monarchy was reduced, as the emperor came to govern a smaller area. In consequence, in outlying regions such as Manz, Gishē, and Merhābētē in northern Shoa, virtual sovereignty was wielded by the local *bālābbāt*. Nevertheless, for a good century after its founding Gondar served as a real imperial capital, and its emperors retained authority over the lords in their shrunken empire. Then, as the monarchy began its inexorable decline due to internal rivalries and the movement of Galla into court and capital, localism triumphed. Ethiopia's Age of the Princes (1769–1855) was as decentralized a political system as was twelfth-century France or fourteenth-century Japan.

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It was at this time that the *makuānnent* came into their own. More unabashedly than ever they constituted, not a hereditary aristocracy in corporate opposition to the king, but a plurality of proud centers of rank—partly inherited, partly achieved—enjoying virtual autonomy. To move toward a modern nation it would be necessary to brake their centrifugal force.

The Clergy

Like the nobility, the clergy may be divided into those who are significant at the national level and those who are primarily local dignitaries. The former reside close to the imperial court, while the latter are thickly distributed around monasteries, churches, and wildernesses all over the country.

The highest ecclesiastical authority in Abyssinia was the *abuna* who, from the time of Frumentius in the fourth century until the death of Abuna Qerlos in 1949, was with few exceptions an appointee of the Coptic Patriarch at Alexandria. Chosen from the Egyptian monks of the convent of St. Anthony near the Red Sea, the *abuna* was brought, at great expense to the emperors, to live out his life in an alien land. Ignorant of the language and customs of the country, he played little part in the conduct of church affairs or in affairs of court; and when he did try to do so, his efforts were usually abruptly checked by jealous clerics and suspicious kings. His functions were purely ritual, but indispensable: he alone had authority to anoint and crown the emperor, to confer orders, and to absolve vows. From numerous revenues, rents, and fees, the *abuna* enjoyed a considerable income. Like the emperor, he was regarded as sacred because of the charisma of his office, and spent most of his time secluded from the public.[39]

Second in rank was the *eçhagē*, an appointment made by the emperor. This was the traditional title of the abbot of the convent of Dabra Libānos in Shoa, which in the course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries gained hegemony over Abyssinian monasticism. The *eçhagē* served as administrative head of the church and had jurisdiction over all monks and monasteries. The most esteemed of the Ethiopian clergy, he tended to wield more actual power than the *abuna*. His provincial deputies, called *liqa kāhenāt*, controlled the secular clergy. This office was also bestowed by the emperor, and its functions included presenting candidates for ordination and deciding questions of protocol in connection with religious ceremonies.

In addition to these supreme dignitaries of the church, a small number of churchmen enjoyed pre-eminent status by virtue of their activities at the imperial court. These included the *aqābē sa'āt* ("guardian of the [canonical] hours"), the chief ecclesiastic at court, and during part of the reign of Zar'a Yā'qob the only official with unrestricted access to the king; the *qēs hāṭsē* ("king's chaplain"); the *liqa dabtarā* ("chief of the *dabtarā*"); and *liqa mammerān* ("chief of the learned men"). These four served as the four su-

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of ascetic piety is stressed at the expense of knowledge. The monk need not even know how to read, though if a lifelong monk he is likely to have devoted much time to traditional studies. The *dabtarā*, by contrast, lives by his lore and his learning. At his best, the Abyssinian monk conveys a real sense of spiritual purity, of profound mystical bearing, of an utterly mild manner. The *dabtarā*, at his best, is a subtle conversationalist and an operator of wondrous effects.*

Thus, while the status of members of the old nobility was a compound resultant of simultaneously operating criteria—family and region, royal favor and accumulated power—the several criteria relevant to the status of the clergy operated more or less independently. This made the religious elite a more differentiated stratum.

This statement need be qualified only by the fact that, in addition to the considerations of ritual purity, ascetic piety, and traditional learning, a fourth factor influenced the status of the clergy, namely, royal favor as expressed in appointments to the high ecclesiastical offices. This factor crosscut the others, for such favor was dispensed to members of all three status groups. The *eçhagē* was always a monk; the *aqābē sa'āt* would seem to have been a *dabtarā;* the post of *alaqā* could be given to members of all three groups.

Just how these types of local clergy were related to the clergy at the national level in the traditional order is a question that is difficult to answer. In any case, it is likely that there were conflicts among their representatives in the competition for royal favor. In the fourteenth century, the ecclesiastics of the royal entourage included only secular clergy, and their deportment was sharply criticized by Eçhagē Fileppos, who charged that "those who live in the dwelling of the Sovereign, go about proudly in subtle raiment and with ornaments of gold and silver—perishables—and are very arrogant."[49] However, once Zar'a Yā'qob had established the custom of bringing members of the convent of Dabra Libānos to the court, the monastic order was always well represented in the royal entourage as well. In the present period one sometimes hears of competition among the different groups for influence in

* The association of impious properties with the main representative of traditional religious learning may be seen as an expression of the Abyssinian's ambivalence toward knowledge as such. The whole tenor of Ethiopian Orthodox religion runs counter to ratiocination and inquiry. It stresses mystery and discourages curiosity with tales like that of the man who tried to probe the mystery of the Trinity and was swallowed up by the earth—a tale commonly told to students who are learning to read. For this reason Orthodox students have frequently been quite upset by the rational theodicy taught by the Jesuit fathers at the University College.

As observed in the previous chapter, moreover, it was traditionally believed that too much learning results in madness, a belief no doubt based on the fact that older church students often drink a certain medicine to quicken their mental faculties, which sometimes deranges them (as the author has witnessed). The *dabtarā*, for their part, would seem to have thrived on this belief, benefiting from the exclusive powers and privileges gained from their esoteric knowledge.

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the contemporary church hierarchy, the *dabtarā* stressing their special intellectual qualification for high positions, the monks their greater piety.

The Traditional Balance

Whatever the internal fragmentation of the church—which was compounded by regionally based doctrinal controversies—it may for the moment be considered as a unified estate vis-à-vis the secular powers. This permits us to raise the question of the integration of politico-military and religious elites in traditional Abyssinian society, a question that may be discussed in terms of two relationships: that between the values represented by the two elites, and that between the interests of their respective institutions.

The social teachings of the Ethiopian Church were couched in terms of practical justice, not universal love. Thus the pacifistic strain in Christianity barely made itself felt. The priests, to be sure, were forbidden to shed blood, animal or human; but this is more in the nature of a necessity for the maintenance of ritual purity than a symbol of moral principle. They went along willingly to the battlefield in ceremonial capacity. In fact, comments d'Abbadie, most of them would reject the interdiction of their taking part in military expeditions as a denial of their rights.[50]

Far from opposing warfare, Ethiopian Christianity served rather as an inspiration and justification for wars; since much of the fighting was directed against Muslim, Judaic, or pagan peoples, the warfare took on something of a crusading tone. As for internecine war, it was commonly justified in terms of *lex talionis*, a religiously sanctioned punishment for the sins of the enemy. In this respect, then, the two elites gave impressive support to each other. The warlords were serving the church by fighting the heathen. The fate of their military expeditions, on the other hand, was assisted by the prayers of the accompanying clergy. This reciprocal dependence was symbolized by the custom of taking some *tābot* along with the army to the battlefield, and by the custom of "greeting" the church as the first thing a warrior does when he returns home.

The values of warfare and religion were further harmonized by the symbolism of the emperor, Lion of Judah. The emperor combined in his person the figures of indomitable warlord and devout—and divinely guided—Christian. This combination was an integral part of the self-image projected by many emperors, as reflected, for example, in the identification with Constantine the Great manifested by Zar'a Yā'qob and Eskender (1478–94) in their choice of throne name, and by Tēwodros II in his coronation speech.

With regard to civil policy, moreover, the nobility and clergy were in basic accord. Both groups felt a special responsibility for adjudicating disputes. Both felt that their superior status entitled them to receive substantial amounts of rent and revenues from lands granted them by the king, and to

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innumerable gifts and services from the rank and file of the peasantry. Differences normally arose only when the secular powers deviated from what were generally the established norms. Thus, certain extremes of exploitation were on occasion strongly condemned by the clergy—usually the monks—as were certain transgressions of Christian custom by the secular powers, including at times the emperor himself. Amda Ṣeyon (1314–44), for example, was publicly rebuked, early in his reign, for having seduced one of his father's concubines and two of his own sisters. More generally, the clergy tended to react against flagrant misbehavior on the part of the military—such as looting the homes of those giving them quarter, or violating the right of asylum.

The extent to which the religious and secular powers stood in economic conflict seems to have depended largely on the amount of land available at any given time. Both groups were interested in the acquisition of rights to land revenues. The rights of the church to land are anchored in a traditional agreement, attributed to Yekuno Amlāk (1270–85), according to which the church was to receive one-third of the land in the realm. It is clear that the holdings of the church grew progressively larger from that time to the sixteenth century. With the subsequent diminution of Abyssinian territory and related social disorganization, the church's claim to its lands was not so scrupulously respected. Thus, Barradas observed that the emperors of the seventeenth century were as anxious to regain lands from the church for distribution to their soldiers as those of previous centuries had been generous in presenting them, while Takla Hāymānot decreed in 1771 that "all lands and villages, which are now or have been given to the Abuna by the King, shall revert to the King's own use."[61] Tēwodros, too, was anxious to recapture as much land as he could from the church. Later in the nineteenth century, however, as Menelik carried out his great territorial expansion, the church systematically acquired one-fourth of all lands in the annexed areas.

In general, it may be said that the clergy and nobility worked to further each other's interests. The nobility supported the clergy by giving endowments to churches and monasteries, setting up churches in newly conquered lands, and observing religious ceremonies as state functions. The clergy, in turn, served secular authority by providing a communications network for relaying and supporting official policies, excommunicating enemies, and providing counsel and morale in connection with military expeditions. Altogether, there was an easy commerce between the two elites. They felt common cause in their responsibilities and privileges vis-à-vis the masses. Occasionally there was even an exchange of personnel, when warlords ended their careers by becoming monks, or clerics acceded to high civil positions, like the Rās of Angot, for example, who in Alvares' time was an ordained priest.

When expectations of mutual support were not satisfied, however, conflict

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792 did erupt between the secular and religious powers. In that event both groups
793 had recourse to powerful weapons: the former, violence; the latter, excom-
643 munication. The history of Ethiopia records numerous instances of the flog-
578 ging or execution of clergy by secular authorities. The action of Fāsiladas
[795] (1632-67), who reportedly "caused seven thousand priests to be thrown head-long from the top of the mountain Balbau for having revolted against him,"[52] would represent but one of the more extreme instances of such violent retribution. Short of violence, the kings at least had other means at their disposal for controlling the clergy: the power to withhold benefices, the right to imprison church officials, the final authority on doctrinal questions, and the ability to block a united front on the part of the clergy by pitting high church officials against each other.

792 On the other hand, infringement on the rights of churches and monasteries,
793 gross civil injustice, or radical departure from religious tradition could on
578 occasion evoke surprisingly effective retaliation by the clergy. D'Abbadie provides some extremely illuminating passages on this matter, from which the following have been extracted:

> More than once have I been present at debates of this nature; I have seen these men of the church, weak and without arms amidst men of war, pleading in the name of the law, indicting the menacing covetousness of the surrounding soldiery, invoking eloquently reprobation against their powerful adversaries, and leading them to disavow themselves that force which constituted their pride. . . .
>
> In the case of an open violation of an asylum, the regular clergy got aroused; the most venerable monks abandoned their solitude, assembled the parish clergy, went into the camps, and generally they obtained justice. When the real culprit was the Dajāzmātch, they brought him to repentance, or else excommunicated him, threatened his servants with anathema if they continued to serve him, put the province under interdict and, aided by the monks of the neighboring provinces, stirred up national reprobation against him.[53]

792 The clergy had other resources which it could employ against the emperor
793 himself. It could influence royal policy through highly placed advisers.
578 Through the *abuna* it could exact certain promises from a prospective em-
643 peror as a condition of coronation. Perhaps most important, the clergy could, through its hold over public opinion, turn the populace against the sovereign. As we have seen, this power proved decisive in the encounters between church and monarch in the reigns of Za Dengel and Susneyos, and contributed significantly to the downfall of Tēwodros and Līj Iyāsu.

643 While therefore the emperor may well have been "supreme in all causes,
792 ecclesiastical and civil," he was far from being the sole, or even the decisive,
793

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source of the influence enjoyed by the clergy. The latter constituted a largely autonomous status group which no emperor could afford to antagonize indefinitely. The attempt to build a more powerful central government and introduce cultural reforms thus required some alteration of their independent status as well as that of the old nobility.

THE FEUDAL ORDER IN TRANSITION

The Decline of the Old Nobility

It must always have been the policy of the Ethiopian emperors, except for those few who did not relish the political side of their office, to seek to maximize their control over the regional nobility. They did this, we have seen, either by granting land, power, and rank to men who were completely dependent on them, or else by controlling, through military and diplomatic means, those lords whose birthright and regional strength gave them strong claims to their positions.

During the past century, however, the idea of subordinating regional nobles to imperial control has come to be conceived more radically and has become the core of a slowly emerging ideal of a modern nation-state. Some such vision was certainly behind the tortuous career of Tēwodros II, whose policy was a reaction against the desperate disunity which the Age of the Princes brought to Abyssinia and to the growing threat from foreign powers. In Plowden's official report to the British government in 1855, he described Tēwodros' work as follows:

> The arduous task of breaking the power of the great feudal chiefs—a task achieved in Europe only during the reigns of many consecutive kings—he has commenced by chaining almost all who were dangerous, avowing his intention of liberating them when his power shall be consolidated. He has placed soldiers of the different provinces under the command of his own trusty followers, to whom he has given high titles, but no power to judge or punish: thus, in fact, creating generals in place of feudal chieftains, more proud of their birth than of their monarch, and organising a new nobility—a legion of honour dependent on himself, and chosen specially for their daring and fidelity.[54]

The task of displacing the great feudal chiefs proved to be scarcely less arduous in Ethiopia than in Europe, however. Tēwodros' high hopes were shattered against the opposing forces of regional ambitions and clerical disaffection. The national unity he won through conquest and reform did not survive to the end of his reign.

Yohānnes IV (1871–89) likewise aimed at uniting the nation, but was distracted from serious internal reform by the need to fight off the encroach-

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• 175 631 565 642 643 ments of Egyptians, Mahdists, and Europeans. His domestic policy was more concerned with the imposition of religious uniformity than with political transformation.

Menelik revived Tēwodros' policy of creating a band of generals loyal only to himself. He did this partly by raising capable men with no connections to high position: Rās Gobānā and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, two of his most important generals, were originally Galla prisoners. The power of the feudal chieftains he manipulated by traditional techniques, sending them to posts far removed from their home bases, and arranging political marriages. But Menelik did not decisively undercut the authority of the great provincial lords, and at his death the old political structure was still more or less intact.

The experience of these emperors was not forgotten by Haile Selassie, who seems to have made it his primary and unceasing ambition to assure his position by breaking down every sort of autonomous power where it previously existed or threatened to develop. Thanks to his policies of centralization and to modern means of transport and communication he was able to become more of an effective autocrat than any of his predecessors.

The main development during the period of his regency as Rās Tafari (1917–28) was the stiffening of his military posture. To start with he had the regional forces of Harar Province, formerly his father's governorship, which he had acquired through the favor of Empress Taitu (Menelik's wife) following Menelik's paralysis. He built up his strength by making improvements in Harar that increased his revenues and the number of his soldiers, and acquired fiefs elsewhere. Following the death of Empress Zauditu's commander of the imperial troops in 1926, he took command of these troops and brought some of his own forces into Addis Ababa. By 1928 he was strong enough to demand the title of *negus* from Zauditu and, as is well known, acceded as emperor upon her death two years later.

[204] During these years Rās Tafari was gradually promoting the idea of a transformation of the position of the old nobility. As early as 1926 a letter published in his weekly newspaper, *Berhānennā Salām*, suggested that the prevailing feudal system of provincial government be replaced by a system based on salaried administrators.[55] An actual change of that order was out of the question at that time. A contemporary American observer thus described some of the obstacles:

> Ras Hailu of Gojjam, Ras Guksah, chief of Amhara, Dejasmatch Ayalu, powerful head of Simien, Dejasmatch Gabra Salassy of Tigre, and Ras Kassa of Shoa, are supreme lords in the rough highlands of the north country. Far removed from the central authority, thirty to forty days' journey, some of them, they are out of touch—living in a different world from that of Addis Ababa. Hundreds of lesser chiefs rally to their standards, each

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> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[56]

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

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175 178 631 642 Finally, by reorganizing the provincial administration through the bureaucratic machinery of the Ministry of Interior, the power and prestige of regional appointments have been reduced. The authority of the central government has been enhanced by redrawing the provincial boundaries so as to cut across, in many cases, what were traditional administrative regions. Governors at all levels have been made ordinary employees of the Ministry of Interior, with assistants and secretaries provided by the Ministry, who serve as a constant check on their activities. Earlier in his reign, Haile Selassie deprived the great provincial governors of the right to order capital punishment and of the prerogative of conferring lesser titles.

178 525 631 642 646 Stripped of their military functions, large revenues, and other means of building up their positions, members of the most important noble families have had no alternative but to submit totally to the sovereign authority of Haile Selassie. This has meant, in most instances, their relegation to posts of high prestige but little consequence: diplomatic posts abroad and, more commonly, the senate. Established by the Constitution of 1931 as the upper house of parliament, the senate was to consist of members "appointed by His Majesty the Emperor from among the Nobility (Mekuanent) who have for a long time served his Empire as Princes or Ministers, Judges or high military officers." The institution was re-affirmed in the revised Constitution of 1955, and has provided, as one of its continuing functions, an outlet for dignitaries with too much prestige of their own to be trusted with administrative positions or permitted to reside in their home regions.

565 631 693 578 Many lesser nobles have remained in the provinces with appointments as regional governors and judges. Because of the shift of political authority to Addis Ababa, they tend to feel forsaken and dispossessed. They regard the behavior of those who occupy high governmental posts in Addis Ababa as selfish and corrupt, and view with no little bitterness the fact that youngsters with college degrees earn a great deal more than they. (A subdistrict governor, for example, earns Eth$50 per month, while those with an A.B. automatically start any government job at Eth$450.)

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178 565 554 Nevertheless, these lesser nobles continue to comport themselves in the aristocratic manner of the old nobility and retain their high status in the eyes of the local populace. However modest their resources now—and many continue to enjoy quite sizable holdings of land—they are proud of whatever titles and offices have been given them. Though their part in the national political structure and status system is not so weighty as that of their forebears, they remain the only fully accepted secular elite in the provinces. It is they who issue the day-to-day commands to the people, and they alone for whom the peasantry has unflinching respect. Short of a brutally totalitarian program that is willing to ignore the sentiments of the mass of tradition-

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recent restrictions on their income, it remains considerable. It is conservatively estimated that they possess at least fifteen per cent of the arable land in Ethiopia, and their general inertia with regard to agricultural reform remains a significant conservative factor.

In the modernizing sector, the position of the clergy has been much more vulnerable. The traditional forms of erudition and piety seem to bear little relevance to the intellectual and moral needs of the modernizing elements. The church's reputation for hostility to change further alienates them from it. But it is by no means certain that the church's position will only decline with the passage of time. Ethiopia will be profoundly susceptible to the appeal of traditional revivalist sentiment as the strains attendant on modernization increase; and by its publication of two monthlies, since 1947, the church has already shown, albeit in a limited way, its capacity to employ modern media for traditionalist purposes. On the other hand, if the tiny band of Western-educated church leaders succeed in promoting some degree of modernization in the church, through institutions like the Theological School and the Orthodox Students Association, the clergy may yet play a constructive part in the social and moral life of transitional Ethiopia. It remains to be seen whether its leadership will be effective enough to move the traditionalist clergy to make those adjustments necessary for survival as a respected status group in the modernizing sector.

The New Men of Power

After curbing the independent power of the *makuännent*, Haile Selassie was careful to prevent others from taking their place in the political structure, determined as he was to consolidate in his own hand all the powers they once wielded. As a result of his centralization of government in Addis Ababa, however, a new group of men have gained pre-eminent status at the national level. We may call this group the "new nobility": "new" because of their development of an urban style of life, and because their influence as an elite is largely directed to the modernizing infrastructure, and "nobility" because of their perpetuation of the traditional hierarchical image of a superior and privileged status group. The core of this status group consists of government officials with the ranks of minister, vice-minister, and assistant minister, who function essentially as a personal administrative staff for the monarch.

As observed above, Tēwodros clearly saw the need for creating a new class of nobles, freed from regional interests and acting solely according to the

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elementary instructors in the government schools, and at salaries much lower than the better trained Ministry teachers. The presence of just one or two priests in these schools would eliminate the traditionalist opposition to them that is now so strong. The situation may be compared to that in Ceylon, where the opposition of Buddhist monks to government schools was eliminated by incorporating them as teachers in those schools.

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175 178 565 642 645 royal will. A solid foundation for such a class was not possible, however, until the central government had been sufficiently stabilized and expanded. These conditions began to be met under Menelik, who established Addis Ababa in the last decade of the nineteenth century and in 1907 created a number of ministries. Housed in buildings inside the palace compound, the ministries were initially regarded as little more than an ornament to dress up the imperial court. Although men of some stature, like Afa Negus Nasibu and Fitāwrāri Hābta Giyorgis, were named to the posts, the offices themselves did not acquire much prestige. It was no great matter when, five years after the death of Menelik, the ministers were turned out of office by a group of military officers at the instigation of Rās Tafari and sent home to their provincial estates.

175 178 645 647 [652] After becoming emperor himself, however, Haile Selassie revived and enlarged the ministerial system. Since the restoration, it has expanded into a complex bureaucratic structure. In addition to some sixteen ministries, a number of specialized government agencies have been formed, and the military and judicial hierarchies and the diplomatic corps have been considerably expanded. The rapid growth of the central government in the past two decades is reflected in its budgetary expenditures, which went from about US$10 million in 1942 to an estimated US$110 million in 1962.

178 647 571 554 565 The growth of this governmental machinery has provided a new basis for elite status in Ethiopia. Mobility channels now run in terms of appointments in the government bureaucracy. The periodic announcement of appointments by the Emperor has become the focus of public interest in Ethiopia since the liberation. Every new list of appointments provides the occasion for intense gossip and *de rigueur* congratulatory parties at the homes of the favored.

178 565 571 The new class of high governmental functionaries under Haile Selassie may be regarded as a transitional elite: partly traditional, partly modernizing. With regard to basis of recruitment, values represented, and style of life, the new nobility present, on the one hand, a direct continuation of the old nobility; and, on the other hand, many features novel in Abyssinian society.

178 565 [646] To some extent recruitment of members of the new nobility was not a creation of new dignitaries, but rather an absorption of members of the old nobility into the new political organization. The recruitment of *makuännent* into the senate, which after all is an organ of the central government, may be taken as an ambiguous instance of this. Some others were given important posts in the civil and military administrations. These include members of the princely families of Shoa, Tigre, Wag, Lasta, and Gōjjam; the Bakere clan, royalty from the Galla province of Wallaga; and scions of the *makuännent* who were important in Menelik's day or before, members of aristocratic clans which go by the names of Bēzā, Mojā, Sofanē, and Addisgē. Such persons are likely to have been awarded the old military titles for purely honorific pur-

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poses. They have been led to renounce extreme particularistic ambitions, thanks to marital connections, intimidation, the lure of new benefits, and a degree of nationalism, but to some extent they remain spokesmen for regional and para-dynastic interests.

Men who did not belong to the old nobility were recruited into the new nobility on the basis of two criteria, loyalty and ability, with loyalty clearly the more important of the two. Some men from very humble backgrounds have been thus raised to the highest governmental positions through their "loyalty" to the Emperor, manifested in great part by their readiness to inform on the words and deeds of others and their obsequious and flattering manner. These have normally not been given the traditional military titles but only the titles of their office. In contrast with the carry-overs from the old nobility, still known as *masāfent* and *makuānnent*, these men have been called *bālaselṭān* ("holders of power"). They have included a number of men who were active in the fight against the Italians, either through the Hagara Fiqer ("National Patriotic Association," a group organized in 1935 to promote Ethiopian unity and combat Italian propaganda) or as patriotic fighters in the resistance. The Emperor also promoted to high position some men who collaborated with the Italians, relying on their earlier record as an insurance against latter-day disloyalty, and using their antagonism against the patriots as a check against excessive ambitions of the latter.

On the other hand, the new nobility includes those who, whether from high family background or not, are so placed because of outstanding ability. This consideration is no longer primarily a question of military ability, but of competence in dealing with technical modern subjects and with foreign diplomats. This group may be equated with the older generation of European-educated Ethiopians. The categories of adjusted aristocrats, ambitious parvenus, and intellectual bureaucrats have thus constituted a latent subdivision among the new nobility; and tensions have from time to time been expressed along those lines.

Despite the elaboration of modern governmental structures under Haile Selassie, the dominant principle of the social order has been that of royal sovereignty. The entire staff of government officials has been the direct sociological descendant of the traditional court retinue. This was conspicuous in the titles given by Menelik to a number of the original ministers: *Afa Negus* for Minister of Justice; *Azāzh* for Minister of Palace; *Bajirond* for Treasurer; and *Ṭsahāfi Te'ezāz* for Minister of Pen. These and other court titles remain in use today. The primacy of the court over all other functions appears in periodic audiences at the palace, when all high government officials and other notables are expected to pay their respects no matter what business may be pending in their offices. The chief value embodied in the status group of the new nobility as a whole has been that of loyalty to the sovereign.

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178 565 661 So long as they remain loyal, the Emperor has tended to let members of the new nobility help themselves to the spoils of office. Some of them retain the view that public office is a private possession, a reward from the emperor rather than an obligation to the nation or people, and that it is, therefore, appropriate to use governmental position primarily to help one's relatives, inflate one's ego, and multiply one's wealth.

178 565 556 [241] [455] For the new nobility, however, wealth is no longer measured primarily in terms of land and cattle, but of money. If they own land, it is of interest chiefly as a source of income, and they tend to prefer using it for cash crops like coffee and *çhat* (a narcotic plant sold in quantities to Arabs) than for the traditional grains and pulse or for experimental crops. They prefer to speculate in real estate rather than to increase the output of their farmlands. Indeed, because of the heightened prestige of money, many officials have been grateful—or would be grateful—for the opportunity to leave government service and become entrepreneurs. They feel very close to that small number of Ethiopians outside the government who have acquired much wealth through commercial enterprise, and who may also be included in the status group of the new nobility.

178 565 556 472 [175] [648] Commercial entrepreneurs came into prominence on the Ethiopian scene in the 1920's, when monopolies in alcohol, matches, salt, and tobacco, as well as trade in coffee and skins, enabled a small number of Ethiopian families, Christian as well as Muslim, to accumulate wealth. Such people became prisoners of their wealth during the occupation, since they felt obliged to collaborate with the Italians in order to protect their privileges. Many more Ethiopians have profited from the modest economic activity in the country since the liberation, although most of Ethiopia's trade remains in the hands of Arabs, Greeks, and Armenians (at least nominally). Their social level approximates that of the higher government officials. They are expected to pay their respects at court along with the *makuānnent* and *bāla-selṭān*. They [662] are often related to high government officials, and attempt to make use of their relatives in office to help them secure commercial advantages. Above all, they share the same style of life.

178 565 369 177 [556] As an urban group, the new nobility enjoy a style of life notably different from that of their predecessors who lived on mountainous estates and in army tents. Even if assigned to provincial posts, members of the new nobility tend to maintain homes in Addis Ababa. They have been quick to incorporate the more conventional urban Western forms of conspicuous consumption. Automobiles and chauffeurs, expensive European clothes, modern houses, Scotch whiskey, and Western-style banquets and dances have become the common ingredients of their subculture.

178 565 554 At the same time, traditional symbols of prestige are still in evidence. The

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*121 532 156 further limited by a number of canons. For example, saints must have no shadows on their faces; "good" characters must be portrayed *en face*, "bad" ones in profile; and honored subjects must be portrayed on the right.* Virtually all aspects of the subject matter—dress, features, actions, symbolism—are prescribed by rigid conventions. That this degree of conformity reflects a cultural attitude and not a want of inventiveness on the part of Amhara artists is shown by the discoveries of Marcel Griaule, who collected hundreds of drawings in Gojjam in the form of silhouettes and graffiti, drawings based on direct observation and exhibiting an "astonishing diversity and revealing . . . a very great liberty of expression." Yet, Griaule observed, "these drawings are scorned by the people, who pay scarcely any attention to them; and by the artists themselves, who regard them as a sort of pastime of no importance, or as an activity reserved primarily for apprentices."[29]

In painting, as in the performing arts, individuality was suppressed not only by the pressure to conform to given models but also by the anonymity of the artists involved. This is more striking in the case of painting which, particularly in the form of miniatures, produced some exceptional works. But painting was carried out for the most part as a devotional activity, and its practitioners were apparently content to remain unknown.

The Written Word and the Oral Tradition

*121 156 538 The written literature of Ethiopia provides as little scope for individuality as does its painting. Like the painters, the authors of the Ethiopian manuscripts have for the most part remained anonymous. Their subject matter has been narrowly circumscribed by the force of tradition, and their genres have been just as narrowly conventionalized.

Ethiopian literature consists primarily of religious writings, in the first instance of free translations from Greek, Syriac, and Arabic texts. Where the writings are original they tend to be either expositions of traditional beliefs and rituals of the church, eulogies of saints, or expressions of pious fantasy on religious themes. The nature of this literature is to extol sacred objects, not to express individual personality. The *Investigations of Za'a Yā'qob*, a very personal and imaginative critique of prevailing orthodoxies dated in the seventeenth century and reminiscent of the French *philosophes*, is the exception that proves the rule; for this manuscript has proved to be a forgery, the work of a Franciscan missionary to Ethiopia in the early nineteenth century.[30]

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[175] * The seriousness with which such conventions seem to have been taken is shown by the episode of Brancaleone, a Venetian painter who was in Ethiopia during the reign of Ba'eda Māryām (1468–78), who is said to have provoked an uproar by painting a Madonna with the child on her left arm instead of the conventional right.

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The effect of this literature has not been, as David Riesman suggests is true of the written word generally, an individualizing one. It did not serve to "help liberate the reader from his group and its emotions, and allow the contemplation of alternative responses and the trying on of new emotions."[31] It has served rather to buttress conformity, by rekindling identification with the sacred symbols of the society. Ethiopian religious literature does not invite introspection; it is a corpus to be venerated and solemnly rehearsed. When a devout Ethiopian reads his daily or weekly portion from some writing such as the *Dāwit* (Psalms of David) or the *Weddāssē Māryām* (*Praise of Mary*), he is said to be "repeating" the text—*Dāwit yedaggemāl*. Most of those who learn to read the words of these writings do not understand the Ge'ez in which they are composed.

A similar function has been performed by the secular literature, which runs primarily in praise of royalty and thus has served to uphold the political status quo. The earliest Ethiopian writings are inscriptions of the Aksumite kings dating from the fourth century A.D. Here, in a style that is to persist through the ages, the royal deeds are recounted in meticulous detail and endowed with the highest morality.[32] Ge'ez chronicles were composed in this manner for most of the emperors after the thirteenth century. The earliest specimens of written Amharic consist of hymns in praise of the Emperor Amde Ṣeyon (1314–44).

Two other written works put the capstone on this conservative structure. The *Kebra Nagast*, the Ethiopian national epic, has served chiefly to legitimate the royal line that came to power in the thirteenth century and to cement once and for all the union of monarchy and church. The *Fetha Nagast*, the traditional legal code based on various canon and civil laws compiled in medieval Egypt, has served not as a working code for the adjudication of court cases but as an embellishment of *de facto* decisions, imparting to the judge an increment of authority by virtue of his ritual of referring to them.

Because of the relative sterility of Abyssinian written literature, art, dance, and music, many observers have concluded that Abyssinian culture provides no outlets for truly creative expression.[33] This judgment is not just. The Abyssinian genius freely discloses itself in the stories, verse, and proverbs that make up its very rich *oral* literature. Within this oral tradition, especially in its verse, a good deal of original expression and personalized commentary may be found.

Ethiopic verse comprises a wide variety of forms which differ according to subject and occasion. Classical *qenē*, Ge'ez verse in praise of some holy figure or political leader, is composed by *dabtarā* on certain religious or political holidays. More playful verses of praise are sung in Amharic by *dabtarā* or minstrels on festive occasions. In such verses the poet may in-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

11. The letter was made available to the author through the courtesy of an Ethiopian informant. The text paraphrases Psalm 79.
12. This and the following section draw in part on material which has been published elsewhere, together with other material on Manz not included here. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, IX (Spring 1964), 204–11.
13. The boundaries of Manz proper include the Mofar River in the south, the Adabāy and Wānchet rivers in the west, the Qechenē River in the north, and in the east a long chain of mountains which pour forth the waters that drain across Manz and which divide it from the lowlands of Efrātā, Gedem, and Qawat. Accurate maps of Manz and its boundaries are not yet available.
14. Their itineraries are described in Isenberg and Krapf, *Journals* (London, 1843); and Paul Soleillet, *Voyages en Éthiopie* (Rouen, 1886).
15. A. Caquot, "L'homélie en l'honneur de l'archange Raguel," *Annales d'Éthiopie*, II (1957), 91–122.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
18. Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *Ya-Ityopyā Tārik Ka-Aṭsē Lebna Dengel Eska Aṭse Tēwodros* (Addis Ababa: Tensā'ē Za-Gubā'ē Press, 1949 E.C.), p. 20.
19. Cerulli, *op. cit.*, pp., 101–3.
20. Doresse, *op. cit.*, p. 165.
21. Chahab ad-Din Ahmad, *Futuh el-Habacha*, trans. D'Abbadie and Paulitschke (Paris, 1898), p. 342.
22. Cf. D. Levine, "On the History and Culture of Manz," *op. cit.*, p. 208.
23. This account of Nagāssi, like the accounts of his descendants which follow, has been constructed from a variety of sources, which, while differing in details, agree on the essential points presented here unless otherwise indicated. Oral traditions were obtained from Amhara informants in Manz and Addis Ababa. The chief written sources consulted include: Heruy Walda Selassie, an unpublished and untitled manuscript on the history of Ethiopia (part of which was published in his *Wā-Zēmā* [Addis Ababa, 1923 E.C.]); Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā, *op. cit.*; Tādassa Za-Waldē, *Ya-Abētohun Yā'qob Teweldennā Açher Tārik* (Addis Ababa: Berhānennā Salām Press, 1948 E.C.); Guèbrè Sellassié, *Chronique du Règne de Ménélik II* (2 vols.; Paris: Librairie Orientale et Américaine, 1930–32); Antonio Cecchi, *Da Zeila alle frontiere del Caffa* (3 vols.; Rome, 1886–87); Major W. C. Harris, *The Highlands of Ethiopia* (3 vols.; 2d ed.; London, 1844); Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*; and Soleillet, *op. cit.*
24. The related claim set forth by his dynasty—that Nagāssi was in the direct line of descent from Lebna Dengel—is less universally acknowledged by Ethiopians. It is still a controversial question whether or not Nagāssi was actually related to Lebna Dengel and, if so, by what route.

    The official genealogy traces the descent line as follows: Lebna Dengel—Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Warada Qāl—Lebsa Qāl—Nagāssi. This is the account set forth in Takla Ṭsādeq Makuriyā's history. The other Shoan authors who

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deal with this matter present different pictures, however. Blāttēngētā Heruy and Guèbrè Sellassié telescope the genealogy: Yā'qob—Segew Qāl—Nagāssi. Tādassa Za-Waldē, on the other hand, leaves the question open; he identifies Segew Qāl as one of Yā'qob's sons, and refers to Nagāssi as father of the Shoan Dynasty, but affirms nothing concerning a connection between Segew Qāl and Nagāssi.

The picture is further complicated by the fact that none of these versions was reported to European travelers in the nineteenth century prior to the ascendance of Menelik. According to information given Major Harris by Shoan informants in the 1840's, Nagāssi inherited royal blood through his mother, who was said to be a granddaughter of "a daughter of the House of Solomon." Four decades later Soleillet was told still another story, namely, that "the kings of Shoa are now of the House of David, heirs of Solomon, cousins of Christ" not through Nagāssi, but by virtue of the marriage of his great-great-grandson, Asfā Wassan, to a relative of the imperial family at Gondar. Cecchi, finally, mentions none of these legitimizing affiliations.

25. Heruy manuscript, p. 19.
26. The latter version is given by Cecchi.
27. James Bruce, *Travels to Discover the Source of the Nile* (5 vols.; London, 1790), III, 255–56.
28. Cecchi, *op. cit.*, I, 241.
29. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 255.
30. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 9.
31. Takla Ṭsādeq, *op. cit.*, p. 257.
32. Harris, *op. cit.*, III, 12.
33. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 301. Heruy's account of the rebellion of Matako is considerably different. We are following Harris and Krapf here since they were virtually contemporaneous with the events, and would have no particular reason not to record them faithfully.
34. Isenberg and Krapf, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
35. Harris, *op. cit.*, II, 133.
36. Arnauld d'Abbadie, *Douze ans de séjour dans la Haute-Éthiopie* (Paris, 1868), p. 173.
37. The word "Manz" (or "Manzeh"), according to local clergy, stems from a Ge'ez expression which means "land on which Christ's blood was sprinkled."
38. Ludolphus, *op. cit.*, p. 215.
39. The architecture and layout of the imperial compound are described in Monti della Corte, *I castelli di Gondar* (Rome: Società Italiana Arti Grafiche, 1938).
40. On the role of the *abuna*, cf. below, chap. v.
41. C. Poncet, "A Voyage to Ethiopia," *The Red Sea and Adjacent Countries at the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1949), p. 61.
42. This is what has been called an orthogenetic, as distinguished from a heterogenetic, pattern of cultural development. Cf. Robert Redfield and Milton Singer, "The Cultural Role of Cities," *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, III, No. 1, 53–73.

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621 into sixty-five named wards (sebekas). The social and demographic character of wards varies considerably, and it is useful to describe them in terms of two contrasting types. At one extreme, the ward resembles a kind
[241] of urban parish. It contains an eponymous Church; and
[423] a majority of residents are risteñas, members of land-owning ambilineages who support themselves by farming and renting homesteads on their lands. But even these wards contrast with rural parishes on several counts.
*[892] The ward is generally compact in size, and internally
[463] undivided beyond the homestead (bet). Within it live out-landers who work outside the ward in exclusively non-agricultural occupations. Further, while the parish is administered in detail by residents, the ward relies upon non-resident agents of the municipality for its administration.

At the other extreme, are the town's "non-corporate"
[648] wards. During the Italian occupation, several of
• [175] Gondar's parish-like wards were sequestered by the invaders as building sites. After liberation, the Imperial government divided each of these wards into tracts, which were deliniated according to the buildings upon them. Tracts were then given as grants (yaribeña mariet, "hero's land") to supporters of the government-in-exile, who were often non-residents of Gondar. In time, the pre-war boundaries of such wards were no longer regarded